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Front Cover: 'After the battle' relics still to be seen in situ are always of great interest and I am indebted to Brian King of Bradford for this photograph taken in Stainburn Gate forest on the main road between Beckwithshaw and Norwood outside Harrogate, Yorkshire. It is believed the Churchill is a left-over from the extensive training carried out in the area.

Centre Pages: Thanks to research by Ludwig Kosche, the true history of this Mercedes-Benz in the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa is revealed for the first time. Formerly attributed to Hermann Goering, positive photographic evidence presented here now firmly establishes its former use by Adolf Hitler during his most triumphant years.

Back Cover: In somewhat better condition, another Churchill can now be seen inside the fort at Newhaven due to be opened to the public in the Spring of 1982.

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The first known photographs of the Staatskarosse IA V148697, which had been delivered to Berlin from the Mercedes-Benz factory on July 8, 1940, were taken on July 19 when Hitler drove to the Kroll Opera House to address the Reichstag.

Between 1938 and 1943 Daimler-Benz AG of Stuttgart produced three versions of its custom-built, 7.7 litre, supercharged Grosser Mercedes Type 770 W 150 convertible limousine. The unarmoured model weighed up to 3,600kg; the armoured version around 4,100kg, and both were powered by a Daimler-Benz straight eight-cylinder M 150 engine rated at 145-155/230 hp. Two open exhaust pipes on the passengers' side of the bonnet showed that the vehicle was supercharged. The third version was the still more heavily armoured 770 K W 150 II, the Staatskarosse or 'State Coach'. (Why the symbol 'K' for Kompressor indicating that the car is supercharged was not used in the designation of the first two models is not known.) The Staatskarosse engine, an M 150 II straight-eight, was capable of developing 160/400 hp and had a top speed of 180 kph, ten kilometres faster than that of the first two models. The body incorporated aluminium mudguards, thus helping to keep the car's empty weight down to 4,780kg. This Staatskarosse version, according to the manufacturer's data sheet, was built for Hitler, though it was by no means the only one he used. The seating capacity of these cars varied from six to eight persons, including the driver.

Hitler's speech, giving his account of the victorious French campaign and including his peace offer to Great Britain, was entitled 'A Last Appeal to Reason' when reprinted and dropped in leaflet form over England (US National Archives NA-HLB-5337-26).

Arrival at the Krolloper. On the left is Sepp Dietrich, commander of the SS regiment, Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler. Hitler's valet, Heinz Linge, holds the door for the Fuehrer. His adjutants, Rudolf Schmundt and Julius Schaub, leave the rear seats (Bundesarchiv).

THE STORY OF A CAR

BY LUDWIG KOSCHE

Since late January, 1971, the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa has had on display an historically unique example of an armoured 770 W 150. This vehicle has been publicised as once belonging to Reichsmarschall Hermann Goering (see later reprints of *After the Battle* issue No. 5); 'it is said to have been issued to' him from the 'headquarters of Adolf Hitler', and the 101st US Airborne Division is credited with its capture in Europe at the close of the Second World War. Research shows these suppositions to be spurious.

The moment of departure after delivering his speech. Note Hitler now wears an overcoat. With him in the background are Goering and Himmler. Erich Kempka is already behind the wheel of IA-148697 (US National Archives NA 242-HLB-5338-28).

Above: **It is the afternoon of March 27, 1941 and a Berlin crowd, reportedly numbering 150,000, thunders out a welcome to the Japanese Foreign Minister, Matsuoka Yosuke, riding at the head of the motorcade in IA-148697 to his 4.00 p.m. appointment with Hitler. Beside him sits the German Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop (the white revers on his uniform are just visible) while the Japanese ambassador, General Hiroshi Oshima, sits beside the driver. Hitler had returned to Berlin from Vienna the previous night for the meeting on an event-packed day which began with a coup d'etat in Yugoslavia (US National Archives NA-242-HLB-5748-21).** *Right:* **The newsreel vehicle, from which film the above still was taken, can be seen preceding IA-148697 — the rear back-up lights were removed at a later date (US National Archives NA-242-JRB-48-58).**

The Grosser Mercedes in Ottawa has five external features which, in this particular combination, have so far not been found in photographs of other Grosser Mercedes 770 W 150 and K W 150 II convertible limousines. These are: an ornamental hole in the radiator; four vents directly beneath the windscreen; two door-hinges on either side, measuring 16.5cm; short, curved side rear-windows; and twenty cooling-slits on both sides of the central hinge on top of the bonnet.

Of the various internal arrangements, the seat next to the driver deserves to be singled out. It is hinged and, when lifted, reveals a standing platform eleven centimetres high. A grip at the top of the windscreen permits the occupant to steady himself when standing up, or in the event of a sudden lurch. Facing the passenger is a compartment in the dashboard, evidently designed to hold a pistol by its barrel with the butt pointing towards him. Two folding arm rests add to the occupant's comfort.

Right: **This close-up shows three of the car's critical identifying features: the four vents beneath the windscreen; the short, curved side rear windows and the twenty cooling slits on top of the bonnet (National Archives NA-242-JRB-48-56).**

The car was built in 1940 and the factory or vehicle number is 429334 — details which are recorded on the manufacturer's plate still affixed to the bulkhead firewall, and which are confirmed by the original order (366986) preserved in the Daimler-Benz archives. The tag giving the car's body number 200728 was removed, probably before 1956. The sales invoice, or any document linking the factory numbers with the police registration, can no longer be traced, and they were in all likelihood destroyed during or after the war. Yet even if such vital papers were to be available, they would in all probability point to Hitler's secretary, Reichsleiter Martin Bormann, rather than to the Fuehrer himself. Bormann looked after Hitler's finances, and more than once held legal title to what was actually the Fuehrer's property. Therefore, the criterion for speaking of any of these Mercedes-Benz cars as Hitler's is 'use' as established largely by photographic evidence. Nor are German military documents of any help in identifying individual vehicles because they mention only 'Fuehrer' cars, with the adjective 'armoured' added at times; no further details are provided. (A few such documents have been reproduced by Gerhard Buck in his book *Das Fuehrerhauptquartier 1939-1945*, Leoni am Starnberger See, Druffel Verlag, 1979.)

The acquisition of new cars for Hitler was de facto a responsibility shared between his personal chauffeur Erich Kempka, who died in 1975, and Bormann. Kempka took care of the technical side; Bormann was in charge of the financial aspect. On the basis of these facts, and information in the original order, it appears that on or about November 3, 1939, Erich Kempka informed Daimler-Benz of the need for a new, armoured, 7.7 litre convertible limousine of the 770 W 150 type. The firm accepted the order on November 25, evidently after Bormann had confirmed it. Eight months later, on July 8, 1940, exactly two days after Hitler's triumphant return to Berlin from the French campaign, the completed Grosser Mercedes with the factory or vehicle number 429334 left the Daimler-Benz factory in Stuttgart under its own power for Berlin, where it was handed over to the Adjutancy of the Fuehrer at Hermann Goeringstrasse 16 — the location of the car pool or Fahrbereitschaft of the Reichs Chancellory.

Barely ten days later, on July 19, the German newsreels filmed Hitler in a Grosser Mercedes with the police registration IA^{V} 148697; this vehicle is identical to the armoured Grosser Mercedes in the Canadian War Museum except for minor details such as the blackout light in the lower centre, or the metal covers on the spare wheels mounted on either side of the bonnet. Photographic coverage shows Hitler to have been associated *personally* with this car at least until March 15, 1942; indications which confirm this are the presence of his own driver, Erich Kempka, and that of his personal standard mounted on one of the two front mudguards — on the passenger's side when Hitler was using it, and on the driver's side when he was accompanied by foreign guests. The police registration provides further corroboration when broken down into its components, thus IA/^{V}/148/697.

IA denotes the geographical location where the vehicle was registered, in this case Berlin. (IIA stands for Munich, IIIA for Stuttgart, etc.) The inclusion of the letter 'v' in red became mandatory by a decree issued on September 6, 1939, by the Minister for Traffic, to take effect on September 20. It applied to all vehicles which were required during the war, but which had none of the following official prefixes in their registration: WH, WM, WL, RP, DR, Pol, SS (army, navy, air force, postal services, railway, police and SS). The first two parts of the registration show conclusively that IA^{V}148697 was not registered as a military vehicle.

Marienburg, East Prussia, September 10, 1941. Visit of Hungary's Regent Admiral Horthy (in dark uniform descending steps). Erich Kempka sits behind the wheel of IA^{V}148697. Hitler's personal standard can be seen in the lower right corner (US National Archives NA 242-HB-47721-449).

A few weeks later, on November 28, Hitler used the same car when he attended the funeral of the German fighter ace Werner Molders killed in an air accident on November 22. On Hitler's right are Julius Schaub and Martin Bormann (Swedish State TV archives via Jan Melin).

The digits '148' have been found on eight registration plates of cars always associated with Hitler and/or his foreign guests. These three digits appear to be exclusive to Hitler, and none of the licence plates which have been found on Goering's cars includes them. Photographic evidence indicates further that plates with a '7' as the first of the last three digits appear in 1938 (764, 768), those with a '4' in 1939/first half of 1940 (485, 461), and registrations with a '6' in three out of four instances in the last six months of 1940 (655, 697, 699). Thus, the date of delivery of the IA^{V} 148697 coincides with the suggested date of issue of registration, the second half of 1940 (see also Appendix A).

Hitler's own reaction towards his new Mercedes-Benz can perhaps be gauged by his lengthy use of this car, as well as by the remarkable fact that within five months he is photographed in yet another open Mercedes-Benz limousine (registration IA-148655) which is, in its external appearance, an almost complete twin of the IA^{V}148697. Possibly still more striking is the further fact that on December 16, 1941, Erich Kempka presented on Hitler's behalf to Marshal Mannerheim of Finland an open armoured Mercedes-Benz limousine (car number 429317, M 150 engine, weight 4,100kg) which, externally, looks like yet another close copy of the IA^{V}148697. All three cars have the cooling-slits in the bonnet, the four vents underneath the windscreen, and the two door-hinges, but they differ in other details. This similarity, not always easily detected in contemporary photographs, has led to misunderstanding; for instance, the Mannerheim car survived the war, and was acquired in 1948 by an American, Christopher G. Janus, who shipped it to the United States. He confused it with the IA^{V}148697. The Mannerheim car, after repeated changes in ownership, is now in California; by contrast, the fate of the IA-148655 is not known.

The presence of the Reich Foreign Minister, Joachim von Ribbentrop, in the photographs of the Matsuoka visit does not mean that the IA^{V}148697 had been turned over to him permanently. Rather, it confirms the practice of occasionally putting vehicles used by Hitler at the disposal of foreign guests. For instance, on May 1, 1939, Hitler was photographed in a Staatskarosse bearing the registration IA-148485; and when on May 31 the Prince Regent of Yugoslavia, Paul, and his wife made a state visit to Berlin, they used this particular car on that day. Several months later, on August 24, and on September 1, 1939, Hitler was once again photographed whilst a passenger in this car.

On April 19, 1943, the day Hitler received Vidkun Quisling of Norway at his Berghof retreat on the Obersalzberg, the IA^{V}148697 was transported to the Daimler-Benz works in Sindelfingen for repairs to the body. Why these had become necessary is not known, nor is there any evidence suggesting that Hitler and/or Erich Kempka had been involved in an accident. On September 15, 1943, after being repaired, the car was once again driven to Berlin and handed over to the Adjutancy of the Fuehrer, exactly as in 1940. There is nothing to show a change either of address or ownership, nor is there presently a single hint regarding the fate of the vehicle until early May 1945, when circumstances permit the inference that it may have been left behind at the Berghof, or sent there some time before the final collapse. Hitler himself had left his retreat for the last time on July 14, 1944. Erich Kempka, whose testimony was published in *The Boston Evening Globe* of November 1, 1945, insisted that he had sent no cars 'before or after' Hitler's last birthday on April 20, 1945, on a 'direct drive from Berlin to Munich', from where Berchtesgaden and the Berghof could easily be reached.

At the end of April 1945, the 20th US Armored Division, under the command of Major General Orlando Ward, joined the battle raging in southern Germany. The division took part in the fight for Munich, helped in the liberation of the Dachau concentration camp, and then turned towards Salzburg, Austria. It was probably on May 4 or 5 that Sergeant T3 Joe Azara of the division's ordnance detachment observed a heavy car secured by wire ropes to a flat-bed railway wagon on a siding near Laufen, north of Salzburg. When he approached the wagon he came under fire from German snipers but succeeded in driving them off and, with the help of his buddies, Sergeant Edwin J. Lasko and Corporal James A. Pendas, and that of Lieutenant John J. Cole (who died in 1974), he removed the vehicle, found it in running order, and drove it away to his 'headquarters' — as the story was later told in Elmira (New York State) and Columbia (South Carolina) newspapers.

The following year Hitler arrives at the Zeughaus to give his address on Germany's Heroes' Memorial Day — March 15, 1942. Kempka and Schaub again in evidence as are most of the identifying features on the car (US National Archives NA 242-HLB-6129-12).

The car broke down a short while after its 'liberation'. The engine had overheated because the oil used was too light, and this resulted in a broken connecting rod. Not at a loss for dealing with such an emergency, 'Sergeant Azara solved this problem' — so the story continued — 'by talking the 101st Airborne Division out of a motor from one of Hitler's cars: a 1944 model of the same make.' A slightly different version of this story appeared first on May 24, 1945 in the 20th Armored Division's newspaper, *The Dispatch*, which stated: 'The engine taken from Hitler's personal car, discovered at Berchtesgaden, will power this military prize.' The car was evidently removed to Trostberg, north-west of Laufen, where its engine was taken out, and put into the IA^{V}148697.

The original order for the IA^{V}148697 listed the engine number as 1015000304. This number, which is an internal Daimler-Benz number referred to as the RB or Reihenbestellnummer, or series order number, can be broken down as follows: '10' PKW or car (these two digits were not always recorded on the order, possibly because it was thought superfluous); '150' type of engine, i.e. Daimler-Benz M 150 straight-eight; '003' number of the series and '04' the number of the individual engine in the series. The present engine in IA^{V}148697 in Ottawa has the number 10150005.0028 stamped on the block. This number is duplicated on a metal tag attached to the other side of the engine. Thus, it is a replacement engine of a later series (fifth instead of third), but of the same or similar horsepower rating (145-155/230) as indicated by the digits 150. Sergeant Azara removed a metal tag from the car from which

What a prize! Sergeant T3 Joe Azara at the steering wheel of the car he 'captured' at Laufen, some sixteen kilometres north of Salzburg. Photo taken late May or early June 1945 by Corporal James A. Pendas.

the replacement engine was taken ('Hitler's personal car', to use *The Dispatch* version); engraved on it are the number of the type of engine, 150, and the number of the chassis (Fahrgestell), 150006/0027. Joe Azara died in 1967 but fifteen years later this souvenir remains in the hands of his son.

The Daimler-Benz order (399902) for the car from which the replacement engine was taken lists exactly the same numbers, namely 150 006/0027 for the chassis and 150 005/0028 for the engine. The car itself, according to the same document, was a Grosser Mercedes convertible limousine ordered in late December 1942 by the professional component of Hitler's personal security unit under SS Major General Hans Rattenhuber, the Reichssicherheitsdienst (not to be confused with the SD or Sicherheitsdienst under Reinhard Heydrich and his successor Dr. Ernst Kaltenbrunner). The car was supplied to the Berlin branch on April 17, 1944.

The same article in *The Dispatch* reveals another, hitherto unknown fact: the IA^{V} 148697, more familiar to the 20th Armored Division as 'Goering's special', was already damaged when Sergeant Azara took it over. 'One "unexplainable" feature of the car', the division's newspaper disclosed, 'was the seven bullet holes in it when captured. A projectile found in the engine . . . looked like German ammo. Three of the bullets had pierced the armor plate in the back, and four had hit the dash board. However, no blood was found on any of the seats.' This damage, including two holes in the upper left corner of the pistol compartment, can still be found on the car. Nevertheless, the article did not report all the damage which had been inflicted on the car, for the windscreen and the first window on the passenger's side are heavily splintered. Exactly when, where and how IA^{V}148697 was shot up continues to be a mystery.

The Dispatch article also explains in part how the Goering legend originated. A 'Dutch displaced person', it reported, 'who worked in a German garage near where the car was found', asserted that it had been shipped from Berchtesgaden 'because it was out of gas, and even Goering could get no more.' When Goering surrendered to the 36th US 'Texas'

The captor of IA^{V}148697 and his friends in a relaxed mood. From L-R: Corporal T5 James A. Pendas; Sergeant T3 Joe Azara; First Lieutenant John J. Cole and Sergeant Edwin J. Lasko (James A. Pendas).

When the engine of what was then erroneously labelled 'Goering's car' broke down, Sergeant Azara removed the one from the Mercedes-Benz (Order No. 399902) pictured at Trostberg, some forty kilometres north-west of Salzburg (James A. Pendas).

Left: **Taken at Trostberg, probably early June 1945. At this stage the car lacked both the original registration number and any captured markings.** *Right:* **This is the first photograph to show — under magnification — the damage to the windscreen as well as the scratch on the top centre of the dashboard which, thirty-five years later, are still to be seen on the car. Note that the sun visors have disappeared. Sergeant Azara is behind the steering wheel with Corporal Pendas in the passenger's seat (James A. Pendas).**

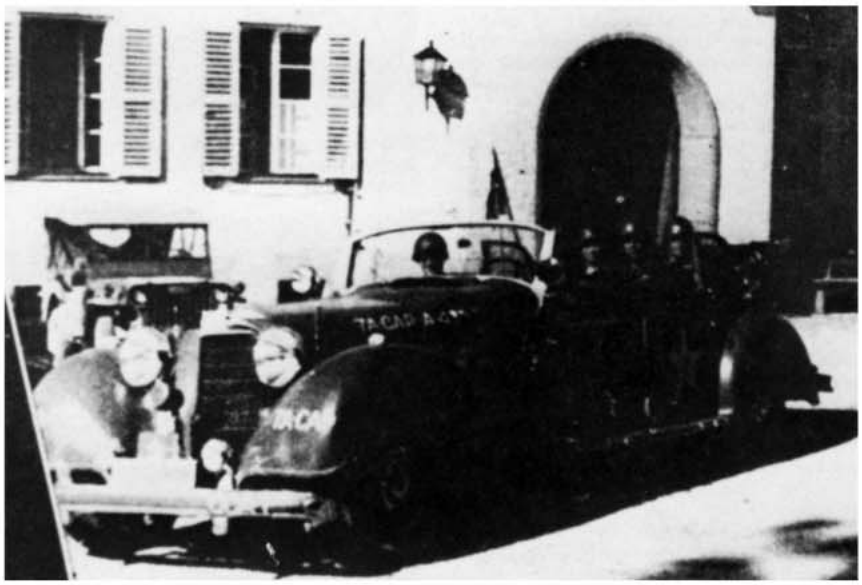
Infantry Division, he arrived with a convoy of twenty to twenty-five cars and lorries, hardly an occurrence indicative of a petrol shortage. Former Corporal James A. Pendas recalled that they were also told by this person, that he saw Goering speeding by on more than one occasion. The story may well have been related in good faith, and need not be questioned as such. It is, however, dubious whether any car could be identified under such conditions. Most Mercedes-Benz convertible limousines require some study, even when stationary, in order to distinguish one car from another. Just as with the Mannerheim car, so here all the indications point to another case of mistaken identity.

A 'former chauffeur' of Goering, who gave Sergeant Azara some technical advice, would have been qualified to express a view regarding the ownership of the IA^{V}148697, but there is no report of any such declaration from this source. Goering's own photograph collection covering his life up to 1942 is deposited in the Library of Congress, Washington. It consists of forty-seven volumes and contains numerous photographs of his cars. Not a single photograph of the IA^{V} 148697 appears in this pictorial record, except a small copy of a Hoffmann picture in Volume 36, and it shows the Fuehrer's men in charge, not Goering's.

The post-May 1945 photographic coverage provides ample confirmation of the identity of the former IA^{V}148697, even though not a single photograph could be unearthed showing the vehicle at this period with its original licence plates still attached to it. On this point it is worth noting that no photographs of any of these Mercedes-Benz cars have been found which show them with the genuine plates retained after capture. Furthermore, no official documents relating to IA^{V}148697 could be discovered in the records of the 20th Armored Division now in the Washington National Records Center.

The IA^{V}148697 was subsequently prepared for the use of Brigadier General Cornelius M. Daly (who died in 1974), commanding Combat Command 'A' of the 20th Armored Division. It was repainted in olive drab and given the markings of a captured vehicle and the single star befitting General Daly's rank. His superior, Major General Orlando Ward, is also reported to have availed himself of the services of this eminent war trophy. In Europe the driver was Sergeant Edwin J. Lasko (then of Centerville, Michigan), while later in the States — to jump momentarily ahead — Corporal James A. Pendas drove it as well, and found that handling it was as easy 'as pie'. If *The Dispatch* was correct in reporting that the odometer read '9,000 miles' (no doubt this should read kilometres) in early May 1945, then the car must have been put to very heavy use until the division's return to the United States, as the next odometer reading would seem to indicate.

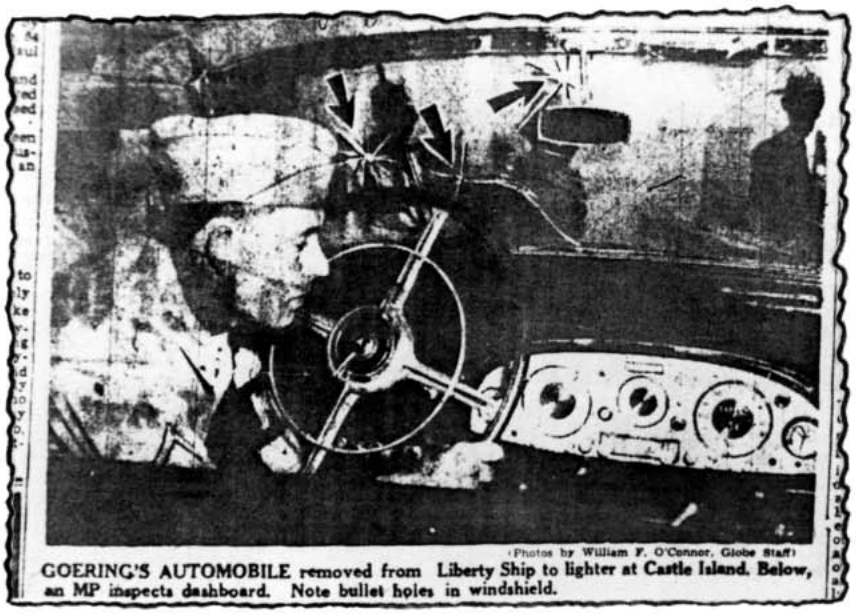
The 20th Armored Division left Europe in late July 1945 and arrived in New York Harbour on August 6. Two days later the IA^{V} 148697, having crossed the Atlantic in the Liberty ship *George Shiras*, was unloaded at Castle Island, Boston. *The Boston Daily Globe* wrote of its arrival the same day in an illustrated article headed 'Goering's Auto Bullet-Proof to Protect Fat Marshal's Hide'. Of the two photographs included in the newspaper's report, the first was re-published by *Newsweek* on August 20, 1945, with a caption of dubious merit. The second photograph was taken from the inside of the car and shows the dashboard and damaged windscreen, to which this comment was provided: 'Then there were the three broken points on the windshield with veins of cracks running from each, unquestionably where someone had either taken a pot-shot at Hermann or some American G.I. had tried to find out if that glass were really bullet-proof.' The match between the damage seen in the photograph and that which exists thirty-five years later is perfect. Additional confirmation



Probably photographed outside the Hotel Gablerbrau, Salzburg in June 1945. This was then the headquarters of Combat Command A of the 20th US Armored Division. Under careful scrutiny, four of the salient features of the former IA^{V}148697 can be recognised. The driver may be Sergeant Lasko and the officer to the right Brigadier General Cornelius M. Daly. The caption to the photograph as it appears in the Divisional history 'Armor in ETO' proclaims it to be the 'Goering special of CC''A'' '.

Described as 'Marshal Goering's car . . . captured by the 20th Armored Div', Hitler's Staatskarosse is unloaded from the troopship George Shiras at Boston. Under a magnifying glass, the lower part of the symbol '7AC' on the bonnet can be distinguished (US Army SC 222379).

is obtained through the odometer reading of '13,900 kilometres'. The reading is the same today as the meter was evidently broken by August 1945 and never repaired. The article further mentions that the car was 'being shipped to California where the 20th Armored Division will reassemble. However, it may show up in a War Bond drive one of these days.' It is not known whether IA^{V}148697 went with the division to Camp Cooke, California, or if it was sent directly to the US Army Ordnance Museum at Aberdeen Proving Ground near Baltimore in Maryland. In any event, it was overhauled between August and October 1945 for use in the eighth Victory Bond drive. It was repainted in dark-grey, equipped with a huge 'red spotlight . . . in front of the radiator grill', and given a new registration in the German style: W-169290. Whether this was a local or a Viennese number from the years 1938-1945 could not be determined. The records of the appropriate agencies in both Washington and Vienna do



(Photos by William F. O'Connor, Globe Staff)

GOERING'S AUTOMOBILE removed from Liberty Ship to lighter at Castle Island. Below, an MP inspects dashboard. Note bullet holes in windshield.

From The Boston Daily Globe article of August 8, 1945, with the damage caused to the windscreen arrowed.

Herman Goering's Auto

Captured at Laufen, Germany by Sgt. Joe Azara

WILL BE EXHIBITED AT

TOWSON ARMORY

Monday Night - Nov., 19 - 8:30 p.m.

. *FREE* .

NO ADMISSION CHARGE

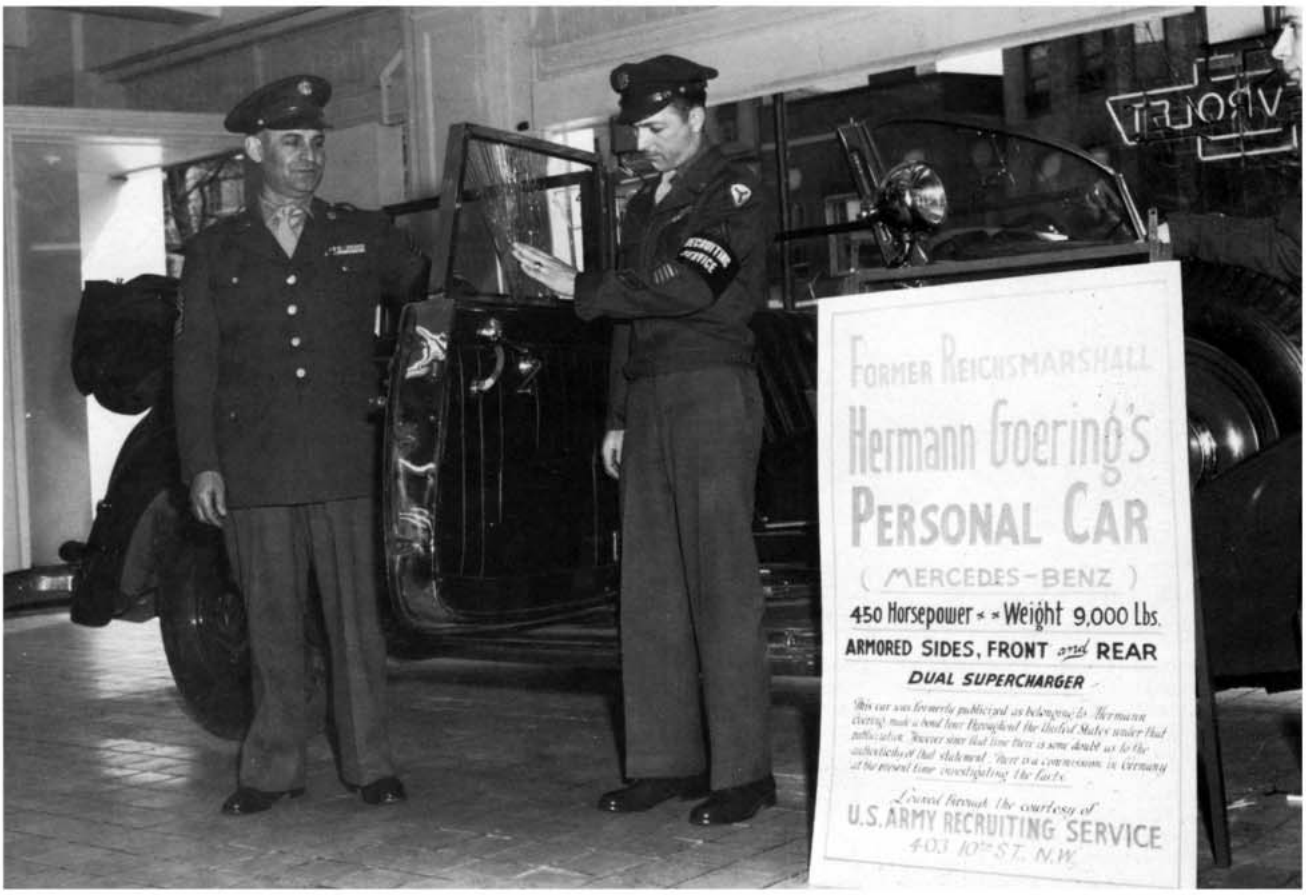
Baltimore County War Finance Committee

Advertisement dated November 12, 1945 — the picture probably having been taken in September/October after the car had been repainted. Note the huge red spotlight which has replaced the American-pattern siren, and the crude, handwritten registration number.

not extend that far back. No evidence has come to light associating such a registration in any way with the pre-May 1945 history of the IA^{V}148697. There is no trace of it after April 1946.

The car went on the bond tour accompanied by Sergeants Azara and Lasko, Corporal Pendas, as well as Lieutenant John J. Cole. Throughout the tour it was advertised as 'Goering's car'. *The Washington Post* announced the display of the '1942 convertible' on Friday, November 2: 'Manning the 8300-pound, 160-horsepower vehicle, which carries 70 gallons of gas in two tanks, will be Sergeant Joe Azara . . . who captured it on a railroad siding while under fire of enemy snipers at Lausanne, Germany.' (Incorrect technical data and place names are explicable as they seem to be the result of faulty conversion, misunderstanding, and possibly confusion with another captured vehicle.) Thereafter the party took the car to New York State, going as far west as Syracuse and Elmira, then south to West Virginia, and then to Augusta and Columbia in South Carolina.

In April 1946, the former IA^{V}148697 served to support a recruiting drive by the US Army by which time doubts had arisen as to whether it really had been one of Goering's cars. On April 6, 1946 *The Washington Post* wrote of it as 'reputed to have belonged' to the former Reichsmarschall; in turn, the US Army expressed its scepticism in the sign which it had provided for the display: 'This car was formerly publicized as belonging to Hermann Goering, made a bond tour throughout the United States under that publicization. However, since that time there is some doubt as to the authenticity of that statement. There is a commission in Germany at the present time investigating the facts.' (No indication of the existence of this 'commission' other than this announcement was found in the course of the present investigation.)



Above: **Photographs datelined Washington D.C., April 10, 1946 when the car was displayed at the Barry-Pate Motor Company Inc. on Connecticut Avenue in support of a recruiting drive. The original captions do not mention the 20th Armored Division as having captured the vehicle (US Army SC230484).**

Below: **Master Sergeant E. Chones and Staff Sergeant E. C. Shipley inspect the instrument panel — the scratch at the top is clearly visible as is the damage to the windscreen. The reading on the odometer is on the point of showing 13,900 kilometres as reported in the Boston article the previous year (US Army SC230483).**

During 1947 the car was transferred to the Property Disposal Office, which apparently kept it in storage for nearly a decade. On October 19, 1956 *The New York Times* carried a brief note (on its page 29) that two 'of the late Hermann Goering's automobiles, including a convertible with a bullet-resistant top' were to be auctioned on October 25. Herbert J. O'Connell, a Montreal collector of antique cars who saw this item, asked his friend R. J. Rumble, a Toronto car dealer and restorer, to bid on his behalf for the 'convertible'; and in the sealed-bid auction the following week Rumble was successful. According to *The New York Times* of October 27, the 'two cars formerly used by Hermann Goering brought nearly $6,000'. O'Connell's prize acquisition arrived in Toronto on December 19, 1956. It was in poor condition.

The restoration of the car was accomplished in 1957 though additional work had to be undertaken after its transfer to Montreal. In retrospect it is clear that Rumble's task was by no means easy. The car's true identity was unknown; no original licence plate was found on or in the car, and virtually no old photographs would have been available locally. Thus it was necessity which forced Rumble to base his restoration work on a photograph of the Staatskarosse with the registration IA-148485. Of all the cars in the '148' registration series, it alone had the lower centre light mounted on a curved bar.

Rumble had similar difficulties in establishing the history of the vehicle. It appears that eighteen layers of paint were counted on the car. These were stated to have alternated from black to 'Luftwaffe green' — the car being repainted for state events or for field trips. The car had undoubtedly a few layers of paint, the two uppermost coats being of American origin. There is, however, no other support for this story. A former driver, who at times substituted for Erich Kempka in driving Hitler, declared that, to the best of his knowledge, none of the cars were given camouflage paint — there being no other explanation for the alleged 'Luftwaffe green'. This statement, of course, applies solely to the four-wheeled 770s; the six-wheeled 770G4s were, beginning with 1940, painted in camouflage; furthermore, it was this type that was used for field trips on account of its cross-country capability. (In any event, it is more likely that the colour would have been Army green rather than Luftwaffe grey.) Finally, his information led Rumble to think that the 101st US Airborne Division had captured the car he was trying to restore.

Major General Maxwell D. Taylor's 101st Airborne had in fact taken over several Mercedes-Benz cars when it occupied the Obersalzberg and the Berghof complex. In the division's history *Rendezvous with Destiny* Leonard Rapport speaks of three such cars, though the real number may have been closer to five. At the request of the US Treasury Department, the division sent two of these captured vehicles to the United States. *The New York Times* reported their arrival on October 20, 1945 in an article entitled 'Treasury to exhibit Hitler, Goering autos.' The former Reichsmarschall's car was described as a 'low, sleek convertible coupe' with 'bullet-proof glass about an inch thick'; in contrast to this sports car, Hitler's behemoth had glass two-and-a-half inches thick and it weighed 'more than 10,000 pounds'. By comparison, the movement order issued on September 10, 1945, by the Headquarters US Forces, European Theater, to the party of ten men and officers from the 101st Airborne in charge of these trophies gave no names, but spoke only of 'two (2) captured German motor vehicles'. A later statement by the US Army Ordnance Museum was equally non-committal: 'No history of any of these vehicles was furnished', except that of the three cars on its inventory a 'roadster was purported to have belonged to Marshal

Toronto, December 19, 1956. The car on its arrival — somewhat despoiled (R. J. Rumble).

R. J. Rumble at the wheel of Herbert O'Connell's prize acquisition (R. J. Rumble).

After its restoration . . . but not quite the same any longer (R. J. Rumble).

Goering, but no documentation existed to support the claim.'

On October 30, 1945, the US Army Signal Corps released a photograph of the two vehicles the 101st Airborne had sent. Unfortunately the caption was reversed, an example which *The Illustrated London News* followed on November 17, 1945, when it published the same photograph. The sports car had in fact been one of Goering's cars, and was known to the soldiers of the 101st Airborne as the 'Blue Goose', probably because of its light blue colour which was a favourite with Goering. General Taylor drove it until his return to the United States in August 1945 and recalls that it bore a coat of arms, an attribute Hitler did not possess. During the Victory Bond drive the 'Blue Goose' was shown in the States of Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Nebraska; and it was perhaps inevitable that it was publicised as 'Hitler's Personal Car', or 'Hitler's Hack', as one Dayton, Ohio, newspaper contemptuously called it. The following year the 'Blue Goose' was present at the first reunion of the 101st Airborne in Indianapolis and, according to *The Indianapolis Star* of August 16, 1946, it even took a few turns on the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. This time Hermann Goering was once again acknowledged as its earlier master; it was auctioned together with the IA^{V}148697, and there has been no trace of it since.

The second Mercedes-Benz sent by the 101st Airborne was, at first sight, just another convertible limousine. During the Victory Bond drive it was billed, like the IA^{V}148697, as 'Goering's car'; this is confirmed by a member of the team who took the vehicle across the country, former Sergeant Richard W. Falvey who, incidentally, kept a scrap book of this tour. However, this car differed in its permanent features by having three door-hinges, as conclusively shown by a photograph *Old Cars Weekly* published in January, 1980, and by having no ornamental hole in the radiator grille. It differed further in its accessories, for in 1945 it still had the flat German blackout light on top of the tripod, as well as the chrome-decorated metal covers for the spare wheels, though the lower front lights had been removed. Like the IA^{V}148697 it was exhibited in Washington in early November, 1945, and *France Illustration* published a photograph of it with the Capitol in the background in its No. 7, November, 1945, issue. Nothing was found in the Washington press of those days to indicate any awareness that two different captured Mercedes-Benz had been put on display. It is equally interesting to observe that known details such as the weight and horsepower figures indicate that the 101st Airborne had sent a Staatskarosse, an inference which has some support by the description of this car as 'Hitler's', in both *The New York Times* and *France Illustration.* The present whereabouts of this vehicle are as unknown as are those of the 'Blue Goose'.

Thus, all three Mercedes-Benz cars which had been shipped to the United States in the summer and autumn of 1945 were evidently mixed up, and a decade later R. J. Rumble became one more victim of this confusion.

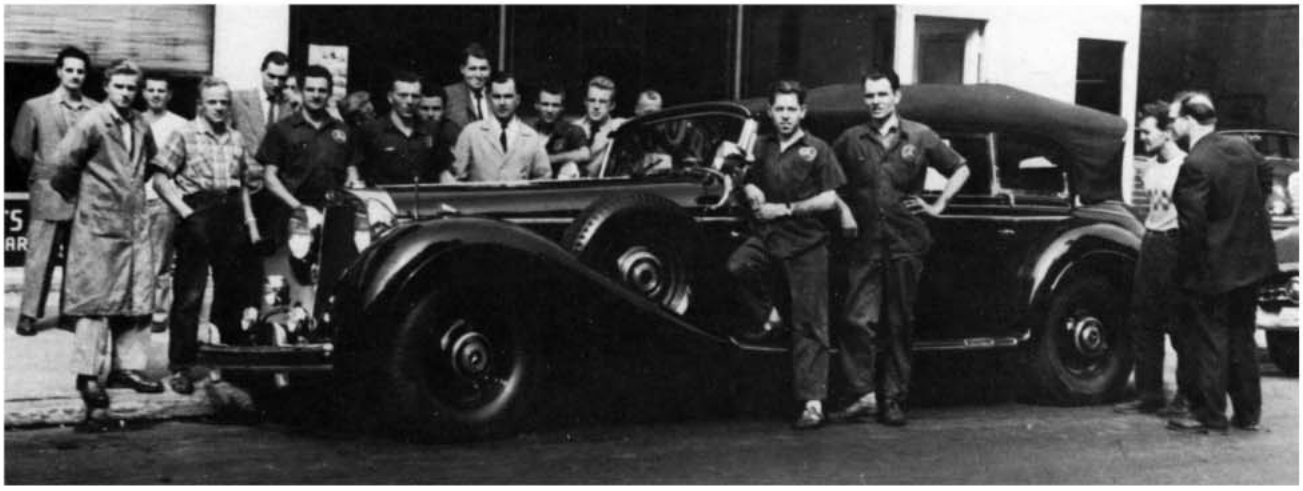
He was not to be the last one. In late 1969 Claude Pratte, who had acquired the vehicle from Herbert J. O'Connell, offered it to the Canadian War Museum. By that time one of the original registration plates had re-surfaced. None of the people who were involved with the car after its arrival in Canada, and who could be asked, were able to shed any light on the matter. Here, as elsewhere, it seems no longer possible to close the gaps in the evidence by drawing upon the memories of the chief actors in the story.

In the summer of 1970 the vehicle was shown at the 'Man and His World' exhibition in Montreal, but as 'Hitler's car', before being sent to Ottawa. Initially the Canadian

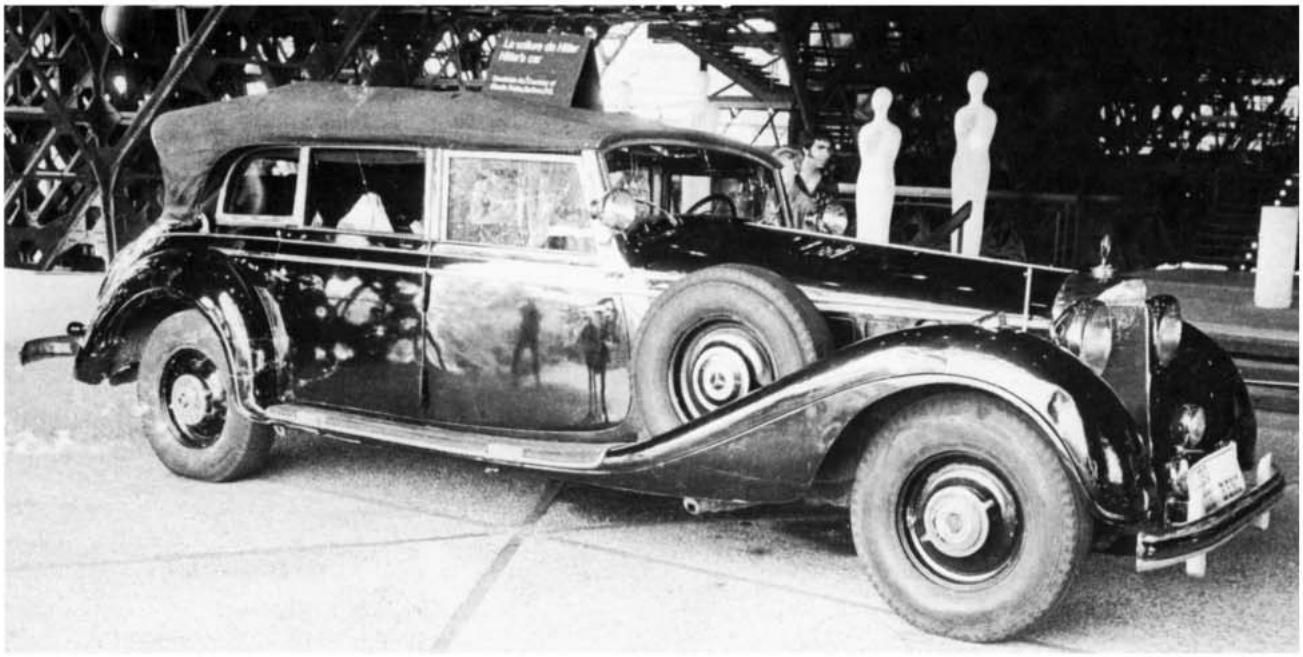
Schorfheide, near Berlin, June 3, 1939. Goering about to enter the 'Blue Goose' six years before it had acquired this nickname (US National Archives NA 242-JRB-21-93).

Possibly photographed in or near Berchtesgaden between May to August 1945, the 'Blue Goose' replaced Major General Maxwell D. Taylor's jeep while he was in Germany. According to a report on the car when it arrived in the United States in October 1945, the colour was 'robin egg blue'. Note a wartime blackout light has replaced the centre spot (US Army, Dan F. Pratt Museum, Fort Campbell, Kentucky).

The photograph released in October 1945 of the two '101st Airborne' Mercedes. The original caption reads: 'Touring the United States for the 8th Victory Loan Drive are these two automobiles belonging to Reichsfuehrer Adolph Hitler and Marshal Hermann Goering. Driven by men of the 101st Airborne Division who found the vehicles at Berchtesgaden, Germany, Goering's car (left) is powered, with an 180HP motor, while Hitler's automobile (right) has 160HP. Both are custom-built 1943 Mercedes-Benz models and equipped with ½-inch armor plate steel and 2-inch bullet-proof glass. Fort Meyer, Va., October 1945.' The reversal probably owes its origin to the fact that, to the driver, the Goering sports car is on the left (US Army SC213059).



Above: IAV148697 in Montreal in 1958 and *below* in 1970, at the 'Man and His World' exhibition. At last billed as 'Hitler's Car,' it would have been more accurate to have stated: 'One of Hitler's cars' (W. Schleich and Ville de Montreal TH 70-260-1).



Ottawa, October 1981. The three folding seats behind the front seats — characteristic of the cars which Hitler used.

War Museum appeared to understand the importance of the original registration plate but then it too fell victim to the established tradition. The display of the vehicle as 'Goering's staff car' — an expression used as late as 1980 — was seemingly enhanced by mounting above the front bumper a replica number plate in the British style, with white lettering on a black background. The number on it read, and still reads in 1981, WL-148697. The genuine plate was painted over, and made to look identical with the replica. In February, 1980, this additional layer of paint was removed, and the original registration number, albeit somewhat faint, was clearly legible: IA V148697, with the lettering on a background still light, authenticated by the 'v', and the seal of the Berlin Polizei with the Nazi emblem, the eagle clutching the Swastika.

Thus, all the evidence flatly contradicts the legend that the armoured Grosser Mercedes in the Canadian War Museum was 'Goering's staff car'; it is in fact one of the cars which Hitler used during the hey-day of his devastating career, and it was not the 101st Airborne which captured it, but Sergeant Joe Azara of the 20th Armored, 'the luckiest and best division in the whole damn Army.'

Corporal Pendas found this pennant in the car and kept it for more than thirty-five years (James A. Pendas).

The damage which still exists on the front passenger window — compare with the picture on page 8.

Some of the bullet holes in the armour-plate at the rear are still noticeable close to the hinges on the right. At the bottom is the winder for raising the plate.

The genuine registration plate mounted in the rear moulding below the boot. The whitish border all round seems to be indicative of the plate having been mounted initially in the frame in front of the radiator.

Above: **Berlin — Tempelhof, August 24, 1939. Hitler arrives less than twenty-four hours after the signing of the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact. Twenty-eight years later this was the car which served as a model for restoring IA^{V}148697 seen *below* on display in the Canadian War Museum in 1980 (US National Archives NA 242-HLB-4472-27 and National Museum of Canada AC-49-70-8).**

APPENDIX A

List of licence plates on Hitler cars beginning with IA-148.

A) *By type and characteristic:*

148 656	Pullman limousine
148 699	Pullman limousine
148 461	Convertible limousine: crossbar between front mudguards
148 764	Convertible limousine: crossbar between front mudguards
148 768	Convertible limousine: crossbar between front mudguards
148 485	Convertible limousine: no vents under windscreen
148 655	Convertible limousine: cooling-slits in top of bonnet
148 697	Convertible limousine: cooling-slits in top of bonnet; no guards behind front bumper

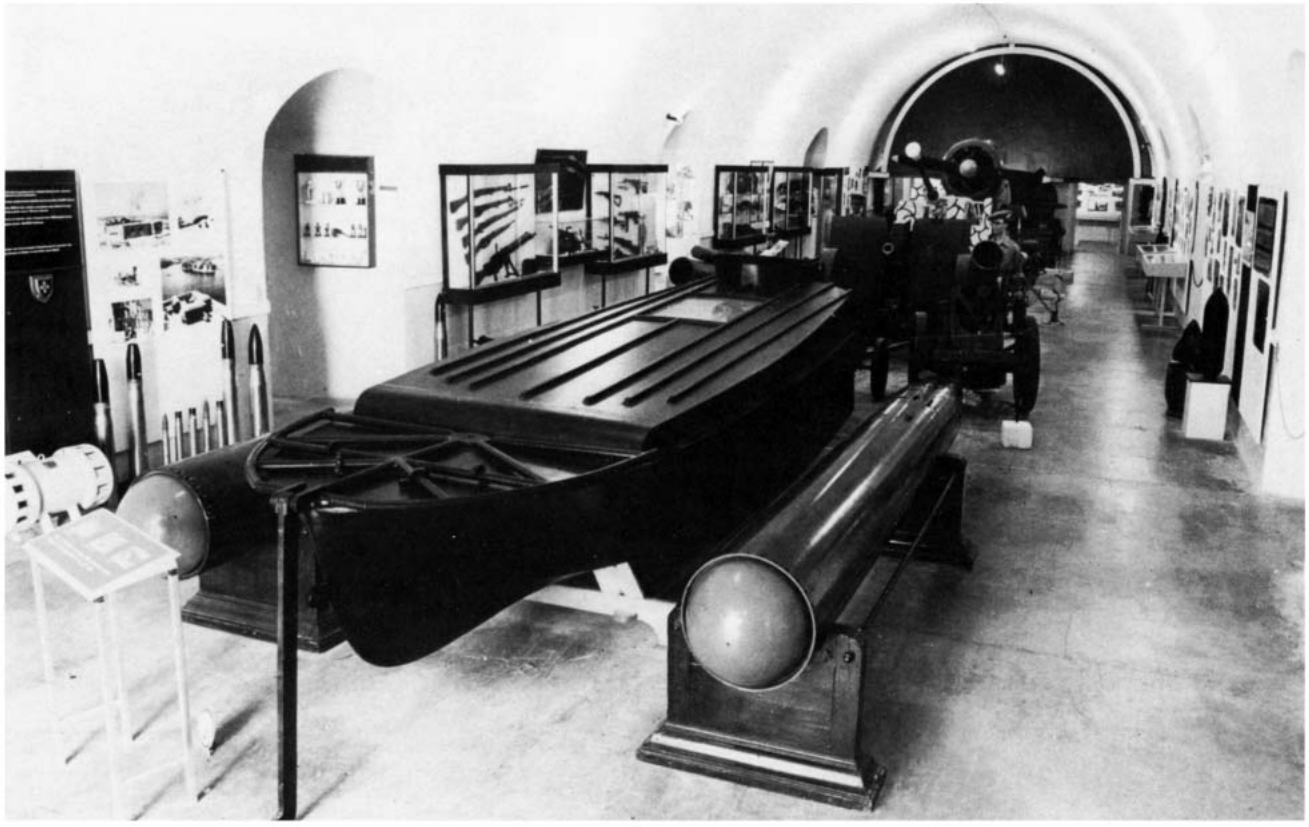
B) *Registration numbers in photographic, chronological appearance:*

148 764	March 14/15, 1938	Vienna, Anschluss
148 768	September, 1938	Nuremberg, Party Rally
148 485	May 1, 1939	Berlin, May Day Parade
148 461	June 18, 1940	Munich, Mussolini visit
148 697	July 19, 1940	Berlin, Reichstag session
148 699	November 12, 1940	Berlin, Molotov visit
148 655	November 21, 1940	Vienna, Hitler's arrival at Castle Belvedere
148 656	? 1940	Sindelfingen, at time of delivery?

The "v" indicating wartime use has been found in the following registration numbers: 148 461, 148 697, 148 699 and 148 764.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer would like to thank everybody for the help so freely extended, but especially Mrs. Jackie Azara and her son Joe, Jim Cox, Fritz Eickenberg, Alan Fell, John van Haften, Jan Melin, Dr. Noebel, James A. Pendas, Frau Helene Reinke, J. R. Rumble, Wilhelm Schleich, Richard Schulze-Kossens, and General (rtd) Maxwell D. Taylor. Additional photographs were obtained through the kind services of the following institutions: National Museums of Canada, Ottawa; CIDEM, Ville de Montreal; National Archives, Washington; US Army, Audiovisual Library, Washington, and the Don F. Pratt Museum, Fort Campbell, Kentucky; Bundesarchiv, Koblenz. Among the various works consulted, these titles were particularly useful: Armor in the ETO. Atlanta, Georgia, A. Love Enterprises, 1946 (the history of the 20th Armored Division); Peter Hoffmann, Hitler's Personal Security, London, Macmillan, 1979; Erich Kempka, Die letzten Tage mit Hitler, Oldendorf, K. W. Schutz, 1976 (revised edition).



July 25, 1981 and the restored 'barchino' is put on display in the Malta War Museum on the 40th anniversary of the Battle of Valetta. We last saw the craft in May 1975 as work had just begun by the Logistics Unit of the Armed Forces of Malta to refurbish it (see After the Battle No. 10, page 37). Philip Vella told us that Comandante Pietro Zaniboni, one of the surviving assault men, came from Italy for the unveiling although a disappointing surprise was that the MTMs did not see service until the autumn of 1941, that is, after the Valetta attack. Nevertheless the craft is still a rare historical item.

From the Editor . . .

It is just twelve months since I last included an editorial follow-up on our reader's letters. I try to make this occasional commentary as varied as possible yet, as always, space is against us. I try therefore to include those letters which add something of interest which we cannot learn from published sources. With many stories, there is often a limit to the amount of research possible before publication. Sometimes one is limited by the desired information just not being available, either in published books or official files; other times the record is lacking in detail and this can only be expanded by personal recollections. The latter are difficult to come by before publication but only too numerous — yet always welcome — afterwards. As soon as an article is in print the feedback arrives, mostly from those readers who were personally involved at the time.

A good example is provided by a letter received from Mr. H. A. Baker of Deal, Kent, following publication of issue No. 29 on the cross-Channel guns. Mr. Baker turned out to be one of the last of the heavy gun fitters from the Royal Gun Factory and I am sure his technical comments will be of interest to all 'Super-Heavy' buffs:

'All service guns unused in either the Dockyards or the Arsenal were carefully greased, painted, blanked off and fidded and had a yearly inspection be they stored on wharfs, gantries or marshes. The stories of guns being found under coal-piles can be treated with the same contempt that the claim that some were fished out of Scapa Flow deserves. That was published in a Dover paper! After all they were valuable stores, on charge to be accounted for, and any such treatment would soon render them unserviceable.

'Only three 18-inch guns were made, two of which were tubed down as ballistic guns for the 16-inch Mk I and disposed of, the other going to Singapore. Several 15-inch Mk I had been given a 14-inch liner for the 14-inch Mk VII ballistics and some would be available.

'The names 'BOCHE BUSTER' etc., more properly belong to the gun carriage than the gun mounted, which originally was for the spare 14-inch guns from the bought-in battleships. Only the Mk III was built as a railway gun.

'The 18-inch Mk I 90-ton 'Hows' were completed late 1918, but not proofed in the Arsenal before April 1919 after which they lay on the Heavy Gantry until 1940 when we fitted them with mechanisms. Incidentally, we removed the 13.5 from SCENE SHIFTER and BOCHE BUSTER in the Arsenal and mounted the 18-inch in them there. The front thrust ribs had two making-up pieces riveted on to make up the diameter, the top is visible in your photo on page 6. I and Harry Colsell fitted and riveted them to the 'How', and fitted them to the mounting. I assure you that I have never been to Doncaster in my life! But I agree that outside propaganda purposes they were almost useless.

'The 13.5-inch guns had a built-in defect in that an extra step was placed in the long bore for the liner to prevent it stretching under stress when fired. This it did but, as the foreward movement of metal was stopped there, a constriction of the bore developed leading to both radial and longitudinal cracking. One gun brought in from the *Tiger* was cracked round at the step with a crack running down the root of one of the rifling grooves into the chamber that would accept a piece of .06in gun wire.

'I am also at a loss to account for your claim (page 2) that the 14-inch Mk VII gun bodies had to be changed after only fifty rounds. Ninety effective rounds was considered normal for a heavy gun and 300 were fired from the 12-inch Exp pilot model before condemnation for retubing. Perhaps the guns were part worn before installation? One 13.5-inch at the Butts on P & E went to nearly 1,300 but accuracy was not required at that range.

'Also on page 8 your author claims that the mounting shown for the 14-inch Mk VII was originally for the 18-inch Mk I. If that is so it has been modified by a complete new cradle and recuperating and buffering systems as the 18-inch was a thrust-ribbled gun that dropped into the cradle and moved with it when fired, whilst the 14-inch VII slid into the cradle and moved independently of it, being buffered and recuperated above and below the cradle via its counterweights. Could it not be the 16-inch Mk II mounting that was taken from Grain with its 14-inch Mk VII mounting for Dover?

The 15-inch Mk I was the Gun Factory's, and my, ewe lamb, a viceless gun. The mechanism I used through the war is now on the right-hand gun outside the Imperial War Museum (No. 76 End Frame) — my last job with heavy guns.

'In making comparisons between ours and the German guns, the age of our equipment should have been stressed. The Germans' guns were of new design to modern theory of use and elevation while many of ours were for low angle Victorian theory of coast gunnery and more bore Viccy's badge than has been admitted.

'May I say I enjoyed the article and I know now why the proposal for us to dismantle the German guns for inspection was feared to be too risky for us'.

In view of the interesting points raised by Mr. Baker with his intimate knowledge of the fitting out of the guns, I thought it would be

fair to get a comment on his letter from Lieutenant-Colonel Montague Cleeve (who was basically responsible for setting up the heavy artillery in WWII — see page 5 of No. 29):

'Mr. H. R. Baker is correct. No guns were found under coal-piles at Woolwich or in the sea at Scapa Flow. Those in the care of the Arsenal, i.e. barrels, not mountings, were most carefully stored and, I *think*, fully accounted for. The case of the mountings is different. When in November 1939 I was directed by the War Office to search everywhere to see if any super-heavy guns had escaped the destruction ordered by the 1920 Disarmament Conference, I remember my father (who was at the War Office at the time), telling me he thought HMG BOCHE-BUSTER might have gone to the Ordnance Depot at Chilwell, Notts. So off I went, but no one knew anything. However, I noticed some very rusty railway lines and I asked to where they led. So off we went to look, and after quite a long walk we found ourselves approaching an enormous transport shed into which three tracks led. It looked completely deserted, and it was, for we had to obtain the services of a large number of bodies to wrench open the gigantic sliding doors which did'nt slide.

'I shall never forget the sight. A skylight ran along the centre of the roof from which hung such a thickness of spiders' webs that we seemed to be peering through a fog. Through the fog, however, I spotted two buffers which on further inspection appeared familiar. Indeed they were the buffers of the mounting of BOCHE-BUSTER. I knew it was my old friend for when I opened the hatches of the two engine-rooms I found in them that all the bronze valves, which had given us so much trouble in 1918, were greased and still wrapped up in the canvas wrapping which I had put around them before the mounting was sent home from France.

'In this same shed was SCENE-SHIFTER and PIECE-MAKER, but all the 14-inch barrels which were on them originally had gone and were never found. There were also some 9.2-inch Mk XIII mountings with barrels, also a number of 12-inch Mk IIIs and Vs. In all, I think, seventeen. And a few others were found elsewhere.

'There was indeed a need for big guns to be used against shipping, but not the mobile super-heavy railway guns which could never be used against moving ships. Moreover, to my great annoyance, the high command made no attempt to understand them and took all their fighting trains, and therefore their mobility, away when put onto the railway system around Dover.

'HMG BOCHE-BUSTER (and the other names) always referred to the carriage. All gun carriages are liable to have changes of barrel put on them from time to time.

'Mr. Baker states that the 14-inch Mk IIIs (on B-B and S-S etc.) were built as railway guns. I question this for we were always led to believe, from what Messrs. Sir W. G. Armstrong Whitworth who built the carriages said, that the guns were lifted together with the turrets out of one of the battleships destined for Japan. The fact remains, however, that sixteen barrels were allocated to the army, twelve of which were scheduled to be put onto BOCHE-BUSTER mountings as the army in France needed them to bust the Hindenburg line. During their construction I believe the army staff in France doubted if even they would be powerful enough and therefore ordered the construction of four 18-inch gun-howitzer barrels, to the same outer dimensions as the 14-inch Mk IIIs, to replace the latter should they prove to be insufficiently powerful.

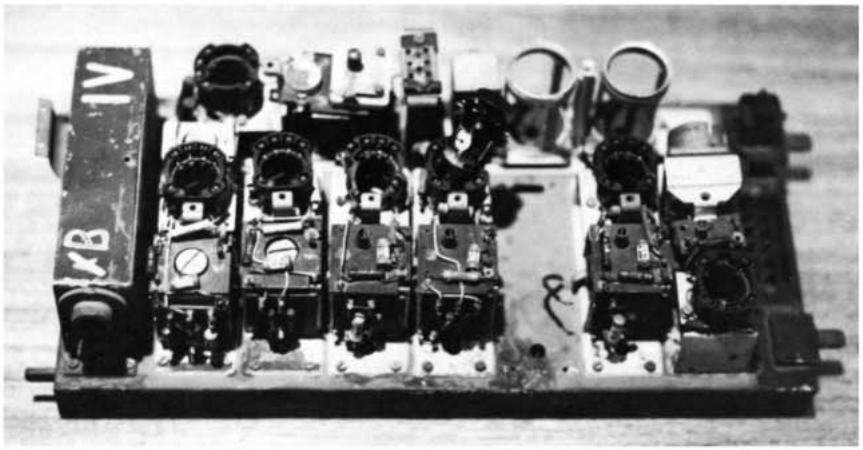
'As one of these 18-inch barrels was quickly found in the Royal Arsenal in 1940, it was allocated to B-B by the War Office and put onto the then-fully restored mounting in the LNER works in Darlington (in 1940). A fourth B-B mounting was discovered (I forget where) and Sir Winston ordered these three mountings to have spare 13.5-inch barrels mounted in them which was done.

'Had I been consulted, which I was not, B-B would have been far from useless. But that is another story. I will only say now, and clearly, that Sir Winston Churchill was fed up with the then-War Office, (as I was also) and ordered the Royal Navy "to get on with it" which they did far more efficiently. But this, again, is another story which does me no good to be reminded about now.

'The 14-inch and 13.5-inch barrels that fired from Dover had short lives because Sir Winston ordered them to be supercharged up to dangerpoint to make them reach the German guns mounted behind the French coastline.

'Finally, it is true that all our super-heavy mountings were of pre-1918 design and my pleas to the War Office to modernise them as I wished, and, meanwhile, to design and build new ones were ignored and I can only presume that the then-War Office knew better than I did. Did they? . . . I wonder. The German guns were far more modern though, in my view, rather clumsy. Our B-B mountings were superb; simple by comparison with the Germans' and completely mobile in action. After the chosen lines of spurs were surveyed we managed to fire BOCHE-BUSTER within five minutes of its arrival on the exact spot

Stories on the recovery of war relics are one of the most popular with readers. Robert Wilson of West Ryde, New South Wales, sent us details of a recovery in July 1981 — even if not an intentional one — from the sea off the south-east coast of Australia. Wreckage of a plane, later identified as a Grumman Avenger, became caught in the nets of the trawler Hollandia. However, by the time the aircraft had been dragged to the shore, only the propeller and pieces of fuselage and undercarrige remained intact but Robert comments that the area, 30km north-east of Sydney, was used to dump complete aircraft at the end of the war. All were surplus to requirements and completely intact, and Robert suggests the location as a possible source of aircraft recovery for preservation.



Another interesting relic, obtained this time by the Brenzett Aeronautical Museum at Brenzett, Kent, is the intermediate frequency strip from the Wurzburg radar set partly dismantled at Bruneval in 1942 (see issue No. 13). Regarding the Bruneval raid, film producer Rene Basilico phoned to take us to task over the number of Bruneval veterans who survived the war. He said that he was currently making a film on the raid for the Army and that over forty men were alive in 1945 of whom he said he had spoken to or visited some sixteen men.

when we had the two RE loco drivers whom we had trained to push the gun in and out of action. Untrained drivers were too slow.'

Colonel Cleeve went on to say that, 'We are indeed fortunate to have so much detail from such an authority as Mr. H. A. Baker. It is sad that interest in the super-heavy railway guns is only now becoming evident. Had this been the case in 1961, BOCHE-BUSTER, at least, might have been saved for posterity. I understand that it was in that year all these guns and their mountings were cut up in Woolwich Arsenal, and, so far as I know, not even their lovely locomotive-style bronze name-plates were saved.'

Dennis Swindale of Maldon, Essex, also wrote to us on the same subject but with a nice 'after the battle' flavour.

'The material on the Dover and St. Margaret's guns has answered questions which I have had ever since I found myself posted to RAF Swingate (ex-aircrew, remustered as a Radar Operator) in the autumn and winter of 1945/6,' wrote Mr. Swindale. 'The area cast a strange spell upon me — I had never lived in a recent battlefield before — and I spent much off-duty time prowling alone about the cliff tops and around St. Margaret's Bay. There were few people about and many areas were still sealed off. Inevitably the big guns and the shelling became the focus of my interest and it was here that I first saw a copy of the German photograph, taken from France, of a salvo of shells landing upon the Chain Home radar site. The picture shows the CH T & R towers and, just visible, the CHL array. I was told that after the shelling, one of the T towers remained standing on just one leg — which says a lot for the construction. Also there can be seen the railway line which led down to the harbour and I feel sure that the upper part of this led to Langdon Battery — certainly I used to walk along part of it to the CHL site. Also in the picture are the old RFC hangars, which we used to pass when going on duty and I remember seeing sailors working on a huge gun inside them. (As you will probably know, the base of these hangars is now a car park.)

'There was a battery almost alongside the CHL site and I remember hearing voices from it one day when walking across to our rest hut to make the "elevenses". I gave the matter no more thought until, just as I was about to carry out a large pile of toast, one of the guns opened fire. Although I had lived in London throughout the blitz, I had never heard a large gun at close range and the effect was not good for my nerves. Toast flew everywhere and I can remember the noise of rust and dust rattling down the corrugated iron of the hut. The chaps in the Ops Block were also a bit shaken, but at least were protected by a blast wall which deadened the sound somewhat. This racket was kept up all morning and I wonder if this was the last shoot of the battery?

'As you may know, RAF Swingate consisted of three operational sites, CH and CHL near each other at Swingate and centimetre gear at St. Margaret's Bay, the latter site being adjacent to and on the eastern side of the Dover Patrol Memorial. The site contained, apart from our buildings, a mobile army radar van, some empty huts and the old coastguard station. The army appeared only once and, for the rest of the time that I worked there, we had sole occupation. St. Margaret's village was nearly all derelict at that time and the radar site was a lonely place — I shall not easily forget my two nights there on my own. Everything on the site showed splinter marks and our refreshment caravan was well patched. Looking over the cliff one could see shell holes in the rocks below (at low water only, of course), no doubt "shorts" aimed at the radar site. In passing, I should mention that some of the holes in the caravan were as a result of fire from our own side. The Royal Marines used to fire live rounds over the heads of their men on exercise to the east of us and their ricochets came through our site. They even planted their red flag by our main gate — on the western side. We would wait for our transport with the Memorial between them and us, watching their bullets kicking up the dust. Never has a transport driver arrived and left with such alacrity!

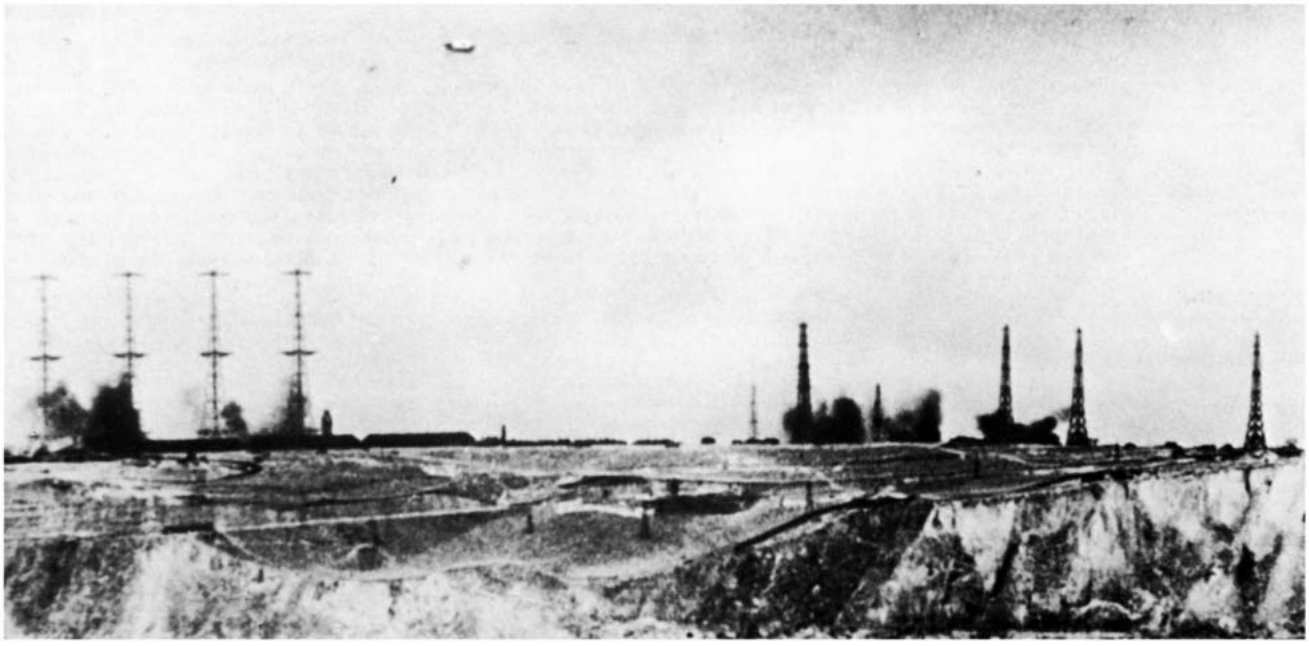
'Another vivid memory is the railway line which served Winnie and Pooh. Going back to camp after late night duty, our drivers got up speed as they left St. Margaret's and, when a personnel carrier was in use, those in the back took-off as we went over the crossing. A friend of mine was sure that he had chipped his spine on a folded seat frame. The guns must have been in situ at this time, but entry was not allowed.

We had two living sites at RAF Swingate, one in the dip opposite the Duke of York's School and the other, the main site, just past the Swingate Inn at the junction of the Deal and St. Margaret's roads. The hut in which I lived had a new end — it had received a direct shell hit and several WAAFs were killed there. The whole area was covered in shell holes and even the bus-stop sign was riddled. One of our fatigue jobs was to collect surplus barbed wire and dump it in some of the larger shell holes.

'Sorry to have rambled on, but as you can see, my short spell at Swingate made an impression upon me and I felt that these snippets may be of interest to you.'

Commander Rupert Curtis, DSC, writing from Lymington, Hampshire, added further information to our knowledge of D-Day. Commenting on the photograph of Queen White beach (issue No. 1, page 1, see also issue No. 25, page 3), Commander Curtis said that 'I commanded the LCI (S) Squadron which carried the 1st SS Brigade (Commandos) under Lord Lovat to the assault on Queen Red beach. Your photograph of Queen White beach suggests that the troops crossing are the 1st South Lancs but it is pretty certain that they are the 1st Suffolks who landed at approximately 0830. The line of craft at the water's edge are definitely LCI (S) of my group which beached down at 0820; my second division landing 41 Royal Marine Commando on the edge of Queen White at La Breche. Lord Lovat and his piper (Bill Millin) landed from my craft LCI (S) 519.'

Mr. W. Burke of London, W12, also phoned to tell us that his brother James appears in the photo on the top of page 23 of No. 1 — the chap with his hand on the girl's shoulder. Mr. Burke was twelve at the time his brother was a Royal Marine Commando. James was killed on July 12 and was buried at Ranville. (Plot 1A, Row E, Grave 11).



Many servicemen have written to us with interesting stories of the discovery or disposal of war material after the war. Sergeant Jim Macdonald of 7 Army Worshop, REME, prompted by the *Lady Be Good* story in No. 25, told us about his own recollections of Libya:

'I remember well the minefields. Some are marked by a line of stones but one didn't know if it was the start or end so it became difficult. In fact a Land-Rover from the Royal Irish Rangers (just so named) stationed in Libya went up on a mine leaving a chap paralysed. After that, when we came to a line of stones, we drove along them until they finished. We also found an old Humber staff car still there but the reason for its continued presence was the little heaps of sand around it each supporting a mine! Once out in the desert one was always finding items but of course the squaddie had more time to root around and get off the main tracks.'

Several interesting letters arrived con-

cerning the *Angels One Five* feature in No. 30. I stated that the provenance of the Messerschmitt (Messrs. Schmitt as one other person spelt it!) Bf 110 featured in the film could not be traced. Mr. G. J. F. Cruikshank of Odiham, Hampshire, wrote that there are three candidates for this aircraft:

'1. The most likely is a Bf 110G-4/R6, Werk Nr. 730301 ex-D5+ RL/1 NJG 3 (allocated AIRMIN 34) which was being held in storage by No. 4 Maintenance Unit at Stanmore in 1949 and arrived at RAF Andover in the early fifties for refurbishing and display, moving on to St. Athan two years later. This aircraft appears to have retained its Luftwaffe marks the whole time.

'2. Bf 110C Werk Nr. 2177 5F+ CM shot down and crash-landed at Goodwood on 21:7:40. Repaired and flown as AX772 in full RAF markings.

'3. Bf 110G-4/R4 Werk Nr. 730037 D5+ DK last noted at RAE Farnborough in RAF marks as AIRMIN 30 in January 1946 and believed scrapped about a year later.'

Another letter on the same subject came from the well-known aviation historian and artist, Peter G. Cooksley:

'A brief note to say how much I enjoyed your feature in issue No. 30 on *'Angels One-Five'* as I saw much of the production at Kenley when, if I remember correctly, an Anson acted as camera ship for the Hurricane flight sequences. The Messerschmitt 110 was, as you say, in fairly poor shape but was probably capable of restoration, had it survived, to exhibition standard. I believe it was Werk Nr. 18085. Among the slightly unauthentic parts, you could have mentioned the Practice Flight's all silver Harvards and the altimeter (?) produced for 'Septic' with the connections neatly pre-severed. Even so the atmosphere evoked in general rang true. A slip would seem to have crept into your mention of Ronald Adam's death in 1974 because I see from my diary that I last met him in April of 1978.'

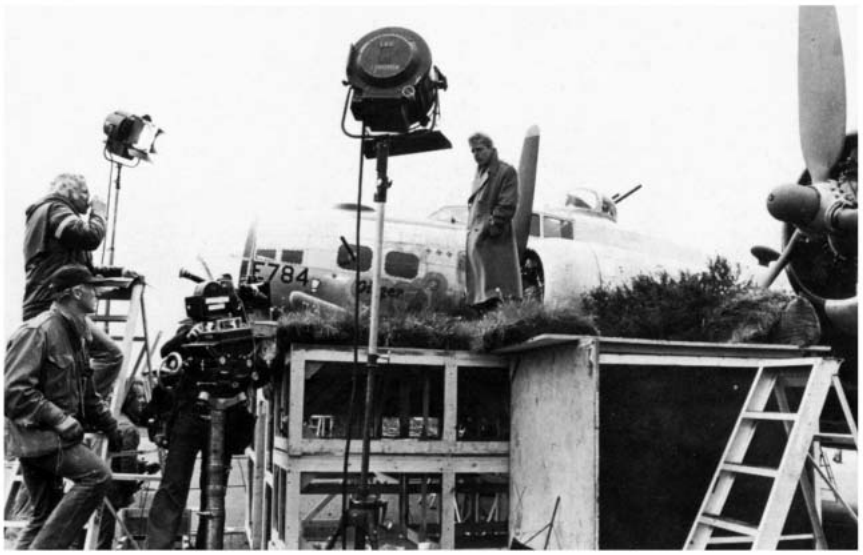
Ronald Adam did die in 1980. My apologies. Ex-WAAF Mrs. Joy Caldwell, who worked with him at RAF Hornchurch during the Battle of Britain when he was Controller 'Ops A', wrote to tell us that under the pseudonym 'Blake' he wrote *Readiness at Dawn* and *Rendezvous at Ten* and that 'he was a charming, kindly man, one of Nature's gentlemen. He still appears on the Imperial Leather commercial as the butler if ever you watch ITV.'

Mr. T. G. Trimmer wrote from Ilford, Essex, to say that the same article brought back a few memories of National Service days with the RAF.

'I was stationed at Headquarters (Unit) Fighter Command, Stanmore Park, Middlesex, in 1951 and well remember a number of our WRAF Fighter Plotters who played their wartime counterparts in the film. Naturally, I saw the film on its release, and have subsequently viewed it on television. One particular shot, I remember, shows a "Stanmore" Fighter Plotter powdering her face amidst the rubble caused by the collapse of the Ops Room ceiling. I recognised several of the girls in the photograph you published but cannot readily recall any names. The name ACW Olive Daykin seemed familiar, but she would have been stationed at Stanmore Park, and not Kenley as mentioned in the article.'

Our war film features always seem popular and it is quite fascinating to find out the tricks of the trade used by the film makers to re-create the war when so little remains to create it with. The *Sally B* is the only airworthy Flying Fortress with authentic WWII markings in Europe, one of the 12,677 built, and is operated by B.17 Limited as a flying memorial to the 79,000 American airmen who lost their lives in Europe during the last World War. The *Sally B* made her display debut on May 18, 1975 and since then has thrilled

When London Weekend hired the 'Sally B' for their new series 'We'll Meet Again', one requirement was for the aircraft to 'belly-in' — rather worrying until the experts showed how painlessly it could be done (London Weekend Television).



crowds at countless airshows. However, at an operating cost of around £2,000 per hour every attempt has to be made to raise funds to keep her flying. Insurance alone costs £6,000 per annum but fortunately this sum was recently earned by the appearance of the B-17 in a new television series by London Weekend to be called *We'll Meet Again*. In May 1980 the television company took over West Malling aerodrome in Kent for two weeks and the fortress, the LWT props department cleverly constructing replica turrets out of fibreglass to fit onto the demilitarised *Sally B*. Filming requirements also necessitated the renaming of the aircraft *Ginger Rogers* and the addition of spurious unit markings, different on either side of the aircraft. In one scene the aircraft has to crash-land but the pictures reproduced here show how painlessly this was achieved.

With all the recent arguments over Citizens Band radio frequencies and the interference resulting from the newly authorised network in the United Kingdom, one letter from Toronto, Ontario, made interesting reading. During the Battle of Britain Roy Speed spent many hours on radio watch at the grammar school used as an operations block at Debden. 'One item of interest you may not have come across,' wrote Roy, 'was caused by one of the freaks that crop up in radio from time to time. We once got a message from Malta to say they had picked up some R/T from one of our frequencies — I can't recall now whether HF or VHF — but a good case of signal bounce!'

Charles J. Appleton of Ashford, Kent, wrote in March 1981 with a personal recollection of the time he was stationed at Changi (issue No. 31).

'I was stationed at Changi in 1947 to 1950 and I went into the 15-inch gun emplacement alongside the runway. One of the guns was more or less whole; the barrel was whole, and the turret was tipped off its track. The rollers laid around the site and quite a number of shells, say about twenty, were still there. The barrel of the neighbouring gun had been cut up into sections, presumably by the Japanese, for scrap and these were removed some time later. I remember the barrel having on the end: "1916 relined 1922". I also remember that a medium-sized gun barrel, possibly 6-inch, was buried behind a barrack block about 1948. I could give a good idea of the position; a trench was dug and the barrel was rolled in to tidy up the barrack block area'.

Another letter adding useful comment to No. 31 came from Captain Paul Handel serving with the Australian REME in New South Wales.

'Firstly, on page 24 you mention the AIF or, as you have interpreted it, the Australian Infantry Force. This is incorrect as AIF stands for Australian Imperial Force. The AIF was

Changi aerodrome photographed by Geoffrey Futter in 1946.

first raised in 1914 for service in World War I, and again in 1939, it then being known as the 2nd AIF. The AIF was an entirely volunteer force, being comprised of the 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th Australian Divisions. The 8th Division was the one selected for service in Malaya, the other three divisions at that time (1939-42) being in the Middle East.

'The second point concerns the famous photo, reproduced on page 9, of the "Barrack Square Incident" at Selarang Barracks. This photo, and indeed many others, were taken by NX 37745 Pte George Aspinall of 2/30th Australian Infantry Battalion. A recently released book *One Man's War* by Stan Arneil explained the true origin of the photographs.

'Some of the "Barrack Square" photographs shown in this volume have been included in the Australian War History and were given world coverage after the war. At no time has any credit ever been given to the photographer, George or "Changi" Aspinall of the 2/30 Infantry Battalion. All of the PoW photographs in this book were taken by Aspinall at great personal risk.

'George was a keen photographer and prior to the outbreak of the War with Japan spent all of his free time at Changi Village assisting a Chinese photographer to develop photographs for members of our battalion

'George was a "loner" and missed check parade at "lights out" more often than he was on it. The excuse normally given was that he was at "Changi" which he was, and gradually he was addressed and still is as "Changi" Aspinall.

In January, 1979, a group from the battalion revisited Changi where a modern village has replaced the little wooden shops of 1942. On the front of shop No. 2000 is the bold sign GEORGE PHOTO — CHANGI. Old Mr. Wong Yeow, who was the owner in 1941, died some years ago but his daughter Sue Yeow, who was a child of seven when George knew them, is the present owner. She was delighted to meet George again and proudly pointed to his name on the front of the shop.

'The technical details of the films will be of interest to photographers. The camera was a cheap KODAK II 6.3 Lens, a small folding type which used 620 film with eight exposures on each film. The camera was small enough to be easily hidden.

'In the first weeks of PoW life it was apparent that searches at Changi would be few and far between and Aspinall made a tight-fitting cover from gas cape material for the camera. The material was waterproof and was carried strapped to Aspinall's waist, fitting into the small of his back. It was carried this way whenever we moved from camp to camp and it came safely through several searches.

'In the first twelve months all of the film was used but two rolls had been wet after they were exposed and became a total loss.

'To prevent further deterioration of film in the tropical climate, Aspinall used X-ray developer to process the film which had already been taken.

'X-ray film and developer was in good supply at the camp hospital but was of no use as the Japanese had confiscated the X-ray machine.

'The developing was a trial and error method as X-ray developer is very coarse and is different from normal developer.

'Additional film was obtained by cutting the large X-ray films into strips to fit the camera. The strips were wound onto the empty spools and Aspinall managed to fit four exposures to each spool. The X-ray film was of rough grain and did not give a sharp image but was better than none at all.

'Some of the X-ray film was cut into pieces of 2¼" x 2¼" and sealed in a small tin for future use. This film was used by placing one square in the camera at a time and exposing it at night, in the dark, then replacing it with

One of George Aspinal's famous photographs taken of the barrack square at Changi.

another. This was the method used for eighteen months and included the photographs taken on the Railway, appearing in this book.

'In the earlier period of PoW days, Aspinall found some photographic paper whilst working on the wharves at Singapore and later, at Changi, prints were made from the negatives. The prints are not the sharp, clear photographs which publishers prefer but the fact that any photographic record of those days was made is a tribute in itself to the tenacity and ingenuity of Aspinall.

'Many negatives deteriorated in quality so much from the tropical dampness that they could not be used. In addition some of the prints and negatives which had been buried for safekeeping lost a lot of their clarity.

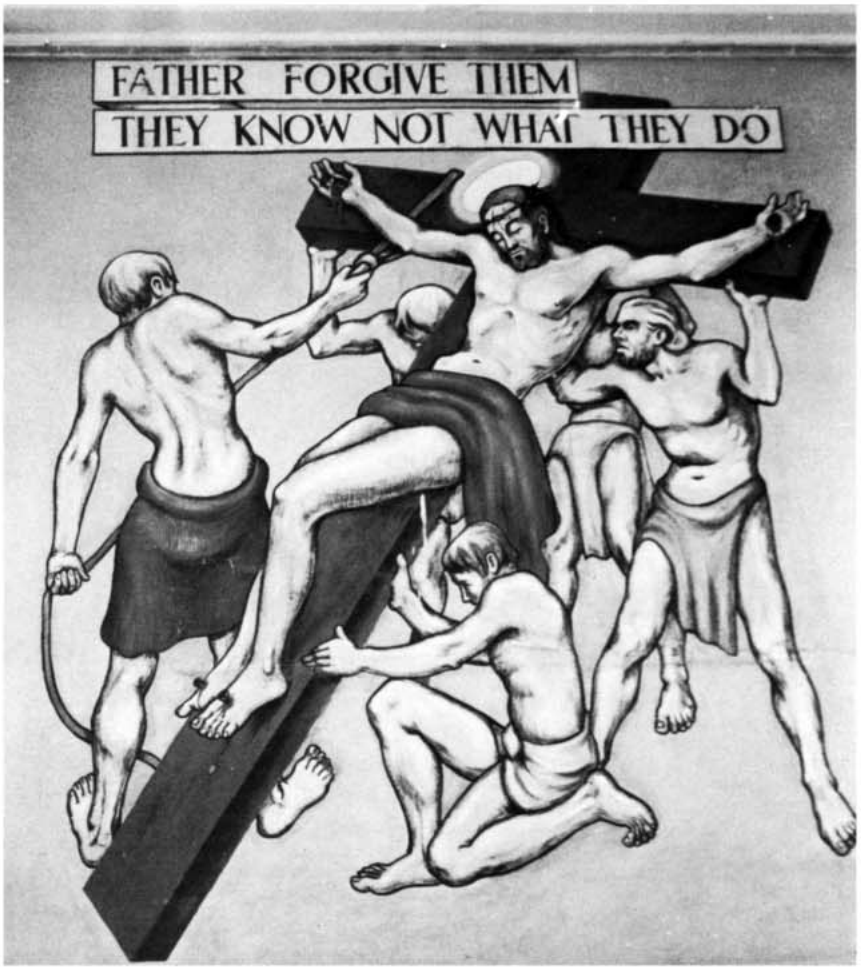
'The last of the photographs was taken on the way back from the Thailand Railway when all the film was used. As it appeared that there would be no more film available, and the risk of the camera being found was becoming greater each day through the increasing number of Japanese searches, the camera was broken up at Kanburi and dropped into a deep well.'

I had tried to establish the original provenance of the Selarang Incident photographs (obtained from the Imperial War Museum) before publication, but without success, so I am only too pleased to be able to publicise George Aspinall's remarkable achievement and give him the credit he deserves.

Another important letter concerning Changi came from Geoffrey Futter of Leeds: 'On page 30 you state that the original Japanese airfield at Changi was constructed on swampy, reclaimed land. I am afraid that this is not the case. The original Japanese airfield was constructed by British and Commonwealth PoWs (housed in Changi Jail) on virgin Red Laterite, and to form the level plateau a considerable amount of cut was required in the foot of Changi hill. The only mechanical equipment used by the PoWs was a narrow-gauge track on which tubs for the removal of spoil were manhandled although the bulk of the earth moving was carried out 'coolie fashion' by the PoWs with shovels and cane baskets. To my knowledge the original airfield was always well drained although it was only a few feet above high tide level. You state quite correctly that Kallang airfield was not capable of continued use as an airfield because of its waterlogged conditon. Prior to the war its condition was in order for the types of aircraft then in use, whereas from the war period, when the gross weight of aircraft increased, the condition of Kallang did not allow its use for the heavier aircraft. I am also enclosing a selection of photos of Changi airfield which I took in 1946.'

More information on Changi post-war came from Mr. J. Peterson writing from Eaglesham, Glasgow.

'I was posted to No. 48 Squadron at RAF Changi early in 1948 and was first billeted adjacent to Block 151. Within a few weeks we moved over to 151 and what was very noticeable were the murals, large as life for all to see. Even then they seemed to have acquired mystical properties and rumour had it that they had been distempered over and had magically re-appeared. As they were just part of the scenery, no particular attention was given them, but one thing I am positive of is that there was no sign of flaking at all. Indeed the third one, which you did not show, of the Crucifixion and its legend "Father forgive them, they know not what they do", is etched into my mind's eye for all time, as it was the first thing I saw each morning on awakening! I left Changi in 1949, complete with its murals intact, and what puzzles me is how they "disappeared" to be "discovered" in the '50s as I am sure that very little change in billeting took place. Perhaps it is the historical significance which is really what is meant? I do know that a tourist board handout states what you repeated, so possibly someone's conscience has twinged at the fact that they were not recognised sooner. In my opinion they rank as a supreme memorial to men suffering adverse conditions; time and no mean effort was devoted to them and they should be preserved for all time.



Reproduced in response to the letter from Mr. J. Peterson, this is the mural in Block 151 that he saw on awakening each morning.

'Changi was more or less as the Japs had left it, complete with bamboo and attap control tower. The E-W runway was the only operational one although the Japs had laid out the site of the N-S one but this was never completed. Your photo on page 31 at the ten o'clock position states that PoWs built the hangar, I am prepared to argue. Certainly there was an edifice in that locality, but there was no way an aircraft could approach it by taxi-ing, and it was in use as a store only. Indeed the only hangar in the whole place is the one at the one o'clock position in your photo.

'Changi was occupied by four Dakota squadrons and a few Harvards. Dispersal was to the south of the E-W runway along the site of present perimeter track and out to the present main runway, beyond which were the wrecks of various Jap aircraft, while adjacent to the hangar was a complete "Baha" bomb. Wonder where it went to?'

The Baha suicide bomb was still standing near the Changi hangar in 1948 although photographed here by Geoffrey Futter in 1946.

Mr. P. A. Dobson of Bitterne Park, Southampton, brought up a significant point which I do not think anyone has yet established: who was the first man killed during the Second World War and who was the last. The thought had occurred to him while serving in the 3 Royal Tank Regiment in BAOR in 1972. At the time he visited the British war cemetery near Celle. There he found the grave of Aircraftman K. G. Day who died on September 4, 1939, apparently part of the crew of an aircraft shot down on a 'leaflet raid' over Germany. In the same cemetery lies the grave of the first British soldier over the Rhine — Captain Barry W. Pierce of the Royal Marines, subsequently killed on April 13, 1945. It will be interesting to hear from any reader who can add anything to establish with certainty who was the first and last to lose their lives. Incidentally the latter will pose an additional problem as to establishing exactly which date to accept as the end of the war. According to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission Charter, Second War dead are all those who died up to December 31, 1947 just as the First World War did not officially terminate until August 31, 1921.

Geoffrey Adams of Poole, Dorset, is a constant source of help and encouragement during our research on Far East stories. He worked on the death railway in Burma (issue No. 26) and was also on the construction of the Japanese war memorials at Singapore (issue No. 31). Early in 1981 came the opportunity for Geoffrey to visit Mr. Futamatsu, the Japanese engineer responsible for the building of the railway. When he returned after a 'fabulous journey to the Orient' Geoffrey told us that, 'Futamatsu spent eight days with me, in Kyoto and Tokyo and answered all the queries arising. He speaks English and supervised the repair of the Tha Makham Bridge in 1946-48. He has been involved with railways in South America — in Bolivia at 12,000 feet — and is now a leading railway consultant in Japan. He confirmed the error of the siting of the bridge at Chonkai (No. 26, pages 10-11) and showed me how they coped with the mistake at HQ, 9th Railway Regiment. He also confirmed that the steel bridge came from Sumatra not Java.

'Loco C5631 was the ceremonial train used in the Japanese link-up ceremony on October 25, 1943; it was taken to Japan in 1979 and is now at the Yasukumi Shrine.

'I can also give you a more detailed caption to the picture on page 15 of ATB No. 31. Photo shows from left to right: Tamura (5 Division Engineers); Priest Suzuki (now at Yasukumi Shrine, Tokyo); Yamashita (GOC 25 Army); Nakano (5 Division Engineers); Kageyama (5 Division Engineers) and some unknowns.'

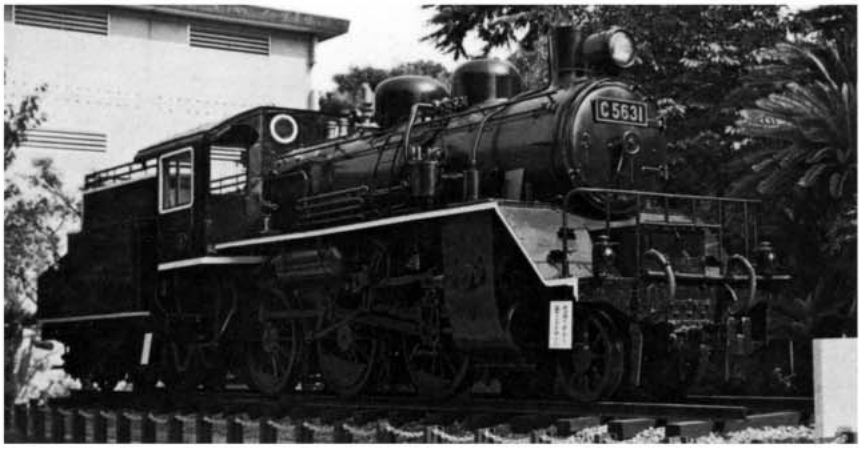
The two graves photographed by Mr. Dobson at Celle in 1972 which prompted the question as to who was the first and who was the last man to be killed in WWII. *Left:* Aircraftman Day, September 4, 1939, and *right* the grave of the first British soldier over the Rhine — Captain Barry Pierce.

One long-time reader and now a celebrated author in his own right is Rupert Allason (see issue 25, page 13). He was in the news recently following publication of *MI5 — British Security Service Operations 1909-1945* published by The Bodley Head in October 1981 under his pen-name Nigel West. This is the first time that a really detailed account about MI5 has been produced and, bearing in mind that there are no official files for consultation and that all MI5 staff are prohibited from publishing their memoirs, Nigel has done a really excellent job. He comments in his introduction that, 'when I began my research I was told by a former Director-General of the Security Service that the task was virtually impossible especially for an outsider' but 'it was this, more than anything else, which encouraged me to embark on the most interesting three years of my life'.

Nigel's major triumph was to construct organisation tables for the different divisions of MI5 and to identify some 200 of the principal people but, let me hasten to add, not with the slightest intention of compromising the necessary secrecy by which the Service operates today as has happened in recent revelations in the United States concerning the Central Intelligence Agency.

As the major part of the book concerns the Second World War period it is a must for those readers interested in British secret service operations of the period. So well has Nigel done his research that he upstaged my own efforts in issue No. 11 where, on page 24, I described the capture of Josef Jakobs near North Stifford in Essex. When I researched this spy issue in 1974-75, all the evidence pointed to this and, although absolute confirmation was not possible, the testimony of ex-Lieutenant Taylor seemed to corroborate the facts — a good illustration why personal recollections given forty years after the event must be treated with caution. Nigel reveals in a detailed three-page account of Jakob's (code-name George Rymer) landing and apprehension that this actually took place in Huntingdonshire at a placed called Ramsey — I might have known it was a put-up job!

Nigel also acted as researcher for the BBC-TV *Spy* series (and was co-author of the book *Spy* published by the BBC) and he sent us



Left: **During his 1981 Far East tour, Geoffrey Adams presented a copy of After the Battle No. 31 to Singapore Prime Minister, Lee Kuan Yew. Although the ceremonial loco C5631 is immobile on a short piece of track at Yasukumi Shrine *(above)*, Geoffrey drove a similar engine C5644 — also taken to Japan in 1979 — on April 20 for 20km, the event being covered by Press and TV.**

A series of photographs taken by British MI5 double agent John Moe, codenamed MUTT, when he returned in 1954 to the scene of his landing in Scotland in 1941. Together with JEFF (Norwegian Tor Glad) he landed on the groyne *(above left)*, **walked up it to the beach** *(centre)* **and knocked at the door of a fisherman's cottage** *(above right)*.

some interesting photographs he had obtained from one of the German double agents:

'I enclose the photographs taken by MUTT (see issues No. 11, page 7 and No. 25, page 12) as promised,' wrote Nigel. 'He and JEFF arrived early in the morning of 7th April 1941 at Crovie as your article correctly stated. They paddled towards the shore and eventually bumped into the concrete groyne. They then walked up to the beach and spotted a small fisherman's cottage. MUTT hammered on the door with his gun which succeeded in terrifying the occupant who directed them off up the hill to a local army camp. In fact the fisherman had merely sent the pair the longest route to the main road. Meanwhile he had run along the coast to a telephone box and alerted the police about the two strangers.

'A short time later MUTT and JEFF were intercepted by a police car on the main road. The rest of the story I think you already know. They spent the rest of the day and the next night in the Banff Police HQ and travelled down to Scotland Yard. They only stayed there a matter of minutes before being transferred to the secret MI5 interrogation centre at Ham Common (shown in our TV programme, CAMP 020, in January 1980).

'The last picture is of Jack Westland, an Aberdeen CID officer, who was caught up in the MUTT and JEFF story. He was used by MI5 to liaise with the local police when several parachute drops were made by the Germans into Scotland in February 1943. In November 1955, Westland told of the wartime adventures of MUTT and JEFF at a Rotary lunch and was subsequently visited by "men in raincoats" who told him to keep quiet. Another lunch planned for a short time later was cancelled. Both incidents were reported in the Daily Mail (Scottish edition) on 11th and 12th November, 1955.

'Both MUTT and JEFF are in good health and live in Sweden and Norway.' (Indeed, MUTT telephoned us from Sweden in December 1979.)

One of the BBC *Spy* programmes featured the Venlo incident (issue 11, page 35) and an interesting comment came to us from Mrs. Payne Best via John Blackmore of Calne, Wiltshire. In reply to a letter sent him in July 1958, Captain Best stated that: 'It is really most kind of you to send those wonderful photographs of Cafe Backus. The cafe and its surroundings are entirely different to what they were in 1939 for then the Herongerweg was little more than a narrow lane, little used except for local pedestrian traffic across the frontier and by people (mainly smugglers) visiting the cafe. The Dutch had a small wooden shed opposite the cafe as their custom house and the Germans a small whitewashed building just past the frontier boom on the left. The cafe stood quite alone with just space enough to park a car on the left (the Dutch side) and was surrounded by close undergrowth except on the German side where there was a playground with swings and see-saws.'

An interesting observation concerning the death of Heydrich (issue No. 24) was put forward to us by Robert Harris, BBC producer of a *Newsnight* film in May 1981 about biological warfare, and who is currently working on a book on the same subject. The mention of poison gas and germ weapons always arouses fierce controversy, especially after the recent disclosure that fifteen American negro convicts were subjected to an American poison gas experiment on an island in the Barrier Reef off Cairns in Queensland, Australia, in 1944 in which all of them died. More recently has come the revelation that the US military authorities made a secret post-war deal with Japanese personnel involved in killing about 3,000 people, including American PoWs, with biological weapons. According to an article by John Powell in the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Lieutenant General Ishii Shiro, who directed the sophisticated Japanese wartime experimental programme, offered to supply full information about the experiments in return for guaranteed immunity against trial for war crimes and that this offer was accepted by US military authorities. A memo from the US HQ in Tokyo, quoted by Powell, states that the advantage of agreeing to the offer was that it would 'result in exploiting twenty years' experience of the director, General Ishii, who can assure complete co-operation of his former subordinates'. Another quoted document stated that the information would be cheap, costing 'a mere pittance compared with the actual cost . . . because of scruples attached to human experimentation'. Another note stated that, 'since any war crimes trial would completely reveal such data to all nations, it is felt that such publicity must be avoided in the interests of defense and national security of the US.' In Britain, the continuing publicity surrounding a wartime germ warfare experiment on Gruinard, in which the Scottish Hebridean island was infected with anthrax, leaving it still toxic today and banned to visitors, keeps the pot boiling. Robert Harris has good reason to believe that the grenade given to SOE for use in the Heydrich attack had poison germs in it, possibly botulism toxin (which, it is believed,

In 1954, MUTT was able to meet the fisherman and his wife under more friendly circumstances.

The following year, CID officer Jack Westland was warned off for speaking about his wartime activities. The secret of the double-cross agents was not made public until 1972.

was made and stockpiled in large quantities by Britain during and possibly after the war). This could explain the queer adaptation of the grenade (see page 8 of No. 24) with crude tape and also the statement on page 17 that, initially, the wound did not seem dangerous and that death was due to poisons carried into the body by bomb splinters. An interesting theory.

Readers often write to tell us of their current research projects or about interesting visits they have made while following their hobby of studying the history of the Second World War. Stephen Elliott of 30 Calver Crescent, Grimsby, South Humberside, is building up a photographic archive of derelict airfields, gun sites, air raid shelters, radio stations, observation posts and pillboxes and similar abandoned military sites. Stephen wants to form a military photographic society and would like to hear from anyone with similar interests.

Mr. K. W. Smith gave us some very interesting comments about his own discoveries on the Continent and, as his letter raised several points of specific interest to readers, I am reproducing it in full.

'Having just returned from a six-month tour of various battlefields in Europe I feel I should warn you of certain work being undertaken by the German authorities. Whilst my father was stationed with the RAF in Germany, we used to live on the line of the old Siegfried fortifications. This was near to Roermond in 1965. In 1974 I revisited the site only to find all trace of the bunker system completely removed — no mean feat as these bunkers were very large. At the time I believed that this was because the area was being turned into a nature park. During the same year, I discovered an area of the Siegfried fortifications close to Monschau that was prolific in all types of ammunition and equipment left from the fierce fighting in the area during late 1944. Since 1974 I have visited the area every year. During 1977, some minor clearance of shells and grenades had been carried out although the vast quantities of small arms ammunition still remained untouched. I visited the site again in April of this year and discovered the German Army clearing the immediate proximity of the bunkers. This clearance resulted in various damaged weapons coming to light. Again all small arms ammo was left in situ. Then on revisiting again in late August I found every single bunker had been completely destroyed and the site bulldozed. The total number of bunkers being dealt with like this is over twelve, and this is only a small site. Again all units are in woodland well away from tourist areas and all seemed very safe in their existing state. Why exactly the German authorities are spending tens of thousands of pounds to do this work is to me a complete mystery.

'As I already knew of the work carried out at the site near Roermond and now this, some sixty-odd miles to the south, I decided to follow the line northwards with the Land-Rover. The story was the same along the whole line. Without exception, all the concrete bunkers had been destroyed. From this I can only deduce that the German authorities have embarked on a total destruction programme of the complete Siegfried Line system.

Therefore, I feel that I should warn you that if you are thinking of running a feature on this famous defence system, if left too late you will find nothing but cleared ground. At the present rate of a couple of dozen workmen destroying as much as they do, I would think within five years at the most every single bunker in the line will have been removed.

'On other topics, I have during the last six months been living in a village at the foot of the fort at Eben-Emael and a chap on the farm was a serving member of the garrison, as indeed were a number of others in the village. Also the farm owns all the land on the hilltop including areas next to the fort. Consequently I have managed to glean various pieces of information from the locals in which you might be interested.

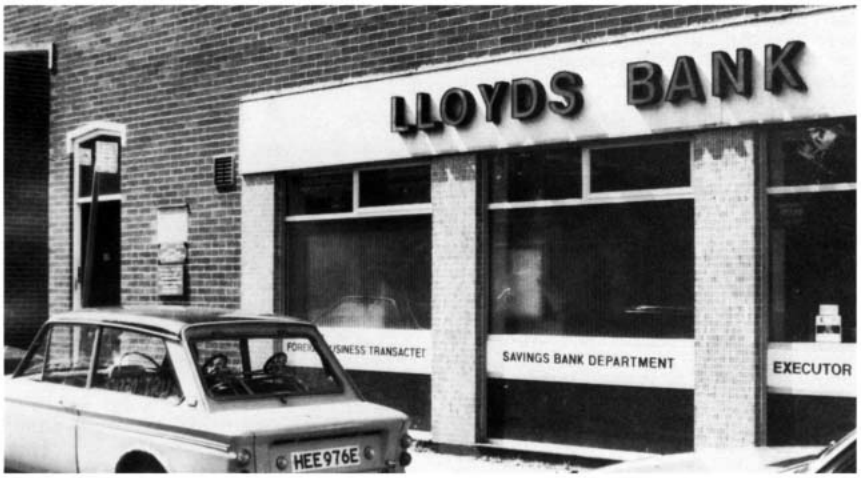
'The most obvious fact concerning the fort was that it was in complete chaos both before and during the battle. There was no food whatsoever in the fort itself and the garrison consisted mainly of local men and reinforcements drawn from half the unit that was entrenched across the river close to Vise. The man on the farm was one of these and, together with others, they volunteered to go to the fort as reinforcements. They were left to make their way on foot as anything on the roads was attacked by German fighters. On arrival at the fort, during the eve of the attack, the fort was in utter chaos. There was no guard and, providing you wore Belgian Army dress, you could walk straight in and out of the main entrance.

'Although times are hard to pinpoint, due to memory loss, etc., it seems certain that a large garrison was emplaced on the slopes of the hill facing towards the River Meuse, the village of Lanaye and Holland. These troops were very heavily attacked by bombers and fighters, the whole area being still heavily cratered to this day.

'Another fact that I had not realised was the active part in the fighting undertaken by German parachute troops, these men having landed on top of the hill just behind the above-mentioned slopes. Various locals remember seeing a large number of parachutes in the area and also the lines of shallow scoops made by the paras for shelter as they made their way towards the fort some 600-700 yards away. As these same people were forced to fill in all the defence works, i.e. trenches, foxholes etc., I have no doubt that what they say is correct.

'Also before war was declared, a small Luftwaffe plane that had been overflying the fort (presumably taking photos) crashed on

Stephen Elliott photographs the memorial at RAF Grimsby — a wartime bomber station. *Below:* Another project has led Stephen to research a Zeppelin raid on Scartho which in 1916 was a sleepy village but now is part of Grimsby. Lloyds Bank, on which the plaque is now mounted, is a replacement for an earlier building.



the outskirts of the village of Lanaye. Another interesting fact is that the people involved in the fighting are firmly of the belief that German troops, dressed in Belgian uniforms, had entered the fort before the gliders had landed.

'Another interesting story was that the old mill by the fort's entrance was used as a base to spy out the fort, the wife of the owner being German. Having myself visited the mill, now owned by an Englishman, it is possible to look straight into the fort's main entrance from one of the barns.

'I still feel that there are a lot of unexplained questions as to why a fort like Eben-Emael should fall so quickly whilst others in the area, although smaller, held out for a few days under extreme pressure from powerful German forces, notably Neufchateau.

'There are also other questions:

1. What are English graves (dated 1940) doing in the small military cemetery at Kanne? No units are mentioned and, to my knowledge, at no time were there any English troops in the area?
2. If the attack on the fort was supposed to be a surprise, why were troops just outside the fort heavily attacked by aircraft?
3. Why after the surrender of the fort were prisoners told that German troops had been in the fort before the attack? This seems very likely as there was no guard checking passes or identities at the main gate. The people I have spoken to say that they left and entered twice during the fighting on patrol and to look for food and at no time were they challenged.
4. Also at another fort (Neufchateau), it was found that the guns of one casemate were useless as even at maximum elevation it was not possible to clear a nearby hill in the line of fire! As this was the main important position, something must have gone very wrong in the planning of the site for the gun. It also seems that the Germans had men working on the forts and had someone somewhere higher up who had access to the making of the plans. No qualified engineer would mount guns that couldn't do anything but shoot into a hillside (unless working for the Germans).

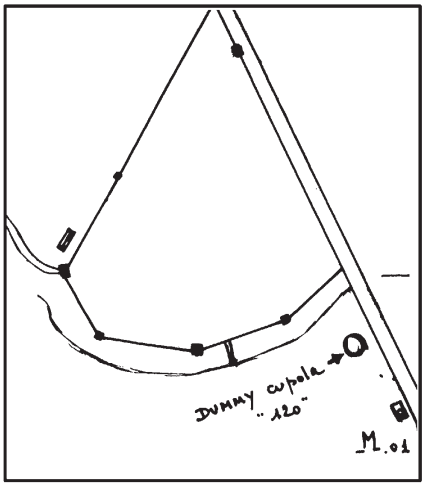
'One last point: the present work being done on this site to widen the canal is now complete and, although the landscape has been changed by the canal, to date the fort itself is undamaged. Also I think I should point out that the area is now used by the Belgian Army for training and any attempt to visit the fort is followed up within ten minutes by the local Gendarmerie. The top of the fort is watched by a local guard and you risk being fined if found on the fort itself. I feel that it might be a good idea if you could publish a warning to anybody thinking of visiting the fort as the patience of the local police is now wearing very thin.'

(This last point was confirmed to us by Peter Thompson of Fixby, Huddersfield, who wrote to say when he visited the fort the military made it quite clear that admission to any part was prohibited.)

Joseph de Hasque was able to give us a clearer picture of the current scene at Fort Eben-Emael when he contacted us to say that the position CANAL SOUTH (see issue 5, page 29) has now completely gone. He said he had been concerned that Artillery Block M.01 nearby would also be demolished and, accordingly, wrote to the Chief of the Headquarters of the Province of Liege, the Brussels Army Museum, the Historical Service of the Belgian Army and the Minister of Defence. He believes that as a result of his efforts, this block will be saved. Also during the construction work, M. Hasque said that a dummy position '120', which lay outside the fort between CANAL SUD and the south-eastern corner, had been uncovered.

Then Mr. N. J. van der Meer, captain of one of the first inland liquid gas barges, sent us photographs he had taken in the summer of 1960 while passing the Fort on a cargo-carrying run from Rotterdam to Liege.

Joseph de Hasque photographed Artillery Block M.01 *(left)*, **and the dummy cupola designated '120'** *(above)* **when it was uncovered for the first time since the war in September 1980 (see his sketch** *below* **for their locations and compare with the German plan in After the Battle No. 5, page 29).**



Snap taken by Mr. N. J. van der Meer in 1960 of the Eben-Emael cutting before the opposite bank was excavated by the cement industry amid much protest from the Dutch, whose frontier runs only a few metres to the east.

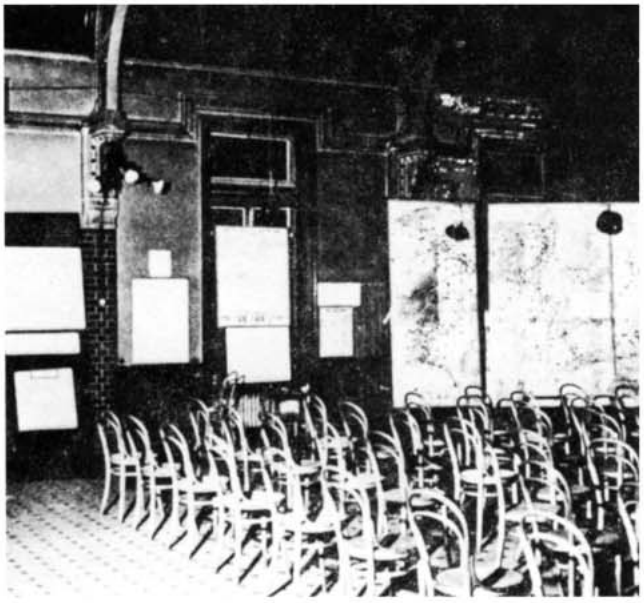
Paul Papier (who was largely responsible for the research in Luxembourg on the SOE Hudson story in issue 26) also sent us the results of his investigation on another item of interest:

'I remember with pleasure our discussion about Patton's and Bradley's headquarters in Luxembourg during the years of 1944-45. Last week I had the good fortune to come upon photographs taken at Patton's headquarters. From December 21, 1944 to mid-July 1945, the American Third Army HQ was located in the "Foundation Pescatore" — a castle-like building in the very heart of Luxembourg city which, before December 1944 and now again, is an old people's home. The map room, which also served for the daily staff conferences, was installed in a 60ft x 45ft room at ground level. This room serves as a dining room today. Also Patton's well-known prayer for better weather was conceived in the house chapel and read by the chaplain in this same chapel.'

Quite often the glimmer of a fascinating, as yet untold, wartime happening comes to my attention. Sometimes I can find out more, develop the story and present it in the magazine; other times one can get nowhere. As I have now started a new feature on readers' own investigations, I therefore throw the following to you in the hope that someone will take it up and tell us the real inside story.

Above: **The G-3 staff under Brigadier General Halley G. Maddox (front row, fifth from left) of the US Third Army photographed outside the Foundation Pescatore in Luxembourg.** *Below:* **Paul Papier's photo taken for us outside what is now an old people's home.**

General George S. Patton, Major General Hobart Gay (Chief-of-Staff) and General O. P. Wyland (XIX Tactical Air Command) in the Third Army map room *(below left)* **now the Foundation's dining room.**



THE EVENING NEWS, TUESDAY, APRIL 15, 1947

Spy in R.A.F. Shot His Pupil, Fled

STOLE PLANE OVER BRITAIN

'INSTRUCTOR' TO DIE FOR TREASON

PRAGUE, Tuesday.

A FORMER 33-year-old Czecho-Slovak Air Force sergeant, Augustin Preucil, shot his pupil, a Polish airman, while serving as an instructor in Britain, and escaped with the plane to Belgium.

This was stated at Prague to-day, when the People's Court sentenced Preucil to death for treason.

Preucil entered the service of the Gestapo as an informer at the beginning of the German occupation of Czecho-Slovakia.

Sent to Poland

The Gestapo sent him to Poland, where he joined the Czecho-Slovak Air Force, and went with it to France.

From France he went to Britain, where he was given the job of training pilots. When he fled to Belgium he was hidden by Belgian patriots, who gave him civilian clothes.

From Belgium Preucil went to Berlin, where he betrayed his Belgian helpers and gave away to the Gestapo several military secrets he had learned in Britain.

He was then sent to Prague. There he gave the Gestapo information on Czecho-Slovak airmen in Britain, which led to the persecution of their families.

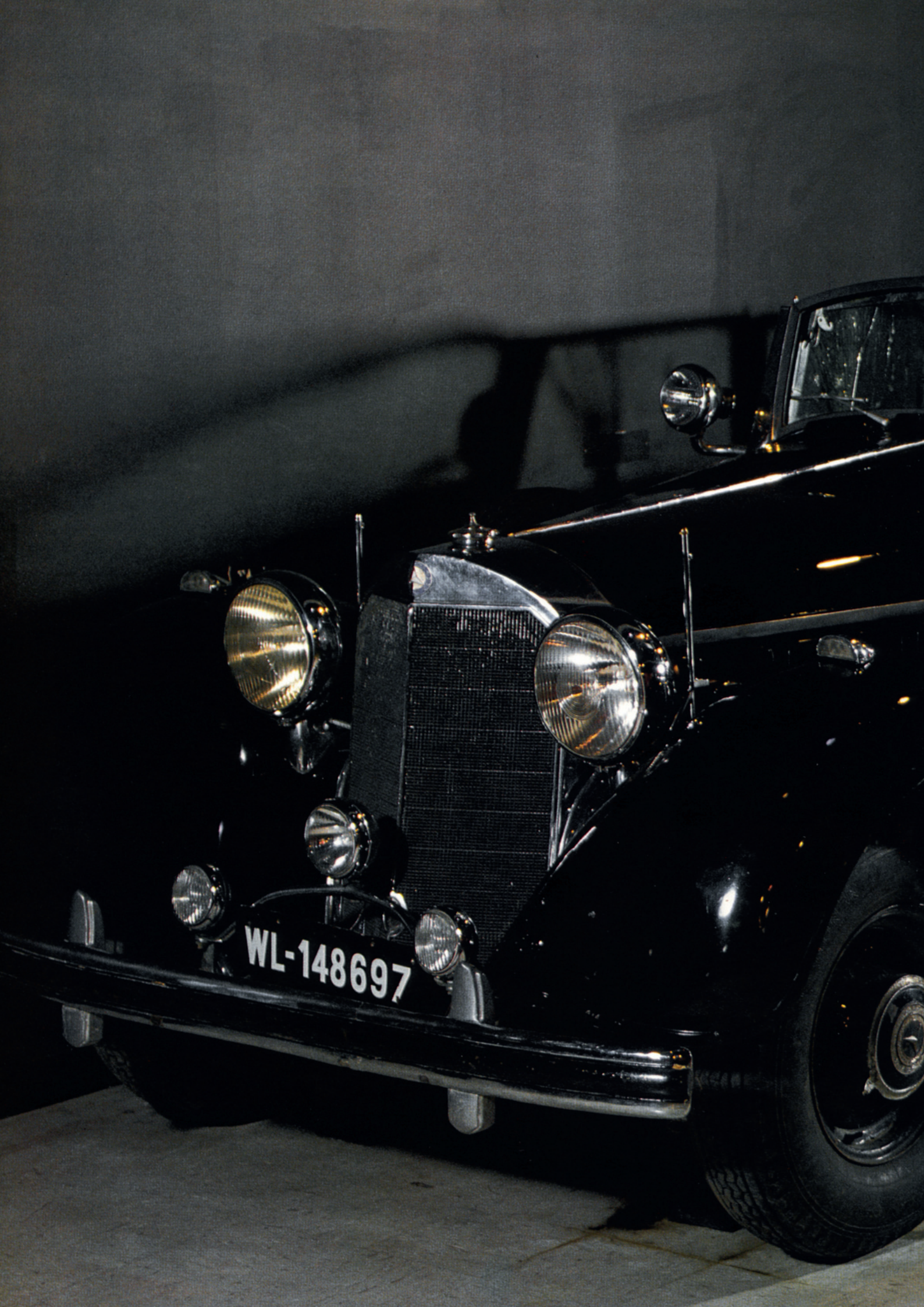
Later he served as a "stool-pigeon" in Terezin concentration camp.—Reuter.

It was in 1979 that our attention was drawn to an item in *The Evening News* for Tuesday, April 15, 1947 which I have reproduced here in facsimile. After reading this, the obvious next step was to check up on Preucil. We discovered he had belonged to No. 55 OTU at Usworth and had originally been reported missing on September 18, 1941. (The Public Record Office file number for the Unit's Operational Record Book is AIR 29/682.) A check with the Air Historial Branch revealed that the loss of the aircraft (Hurricane W9147) was attributed to an 'accident' and that an Accident Card existed for this aircraft. This stated that while dogfighting with a Polish sergeant pilot, Preucil was presumed to have had engine failure at sea between Sunderland and West Hartlepool. Other members of the squadron reported that they lost sight of the aircraft after flames were seen coming from the radiator. A rider added that ' . . . has written to Fighter Command HQ proposing that all Poles are sent to No. 58 OTU, and other Allies elsewhere, as difficult to get Poles to use R/T correctly, especially when excited'. However, there was no actual confirmation to back up *The Evening News* allegation that Preucil had shot down a fellow pilot. The other details, that of being a turncoat and being executed by the Czechoslovakian authorities are confirmed by an entry on the RAF Casualty Card. So there it is. Did Preucil or did he not murder his countryman? That such things occurred during the war has often been rumoured before. With millions of men being provided with all manner of weapons to kill and frequently having the opportunity, quite possibly some old scores were settled under the guise of battle.

A shot across the bows came from Martin Thompson, PRO for the 390th BG Memorial Air Museum concerning our story on 'Artwork of the Eighth' in issue No. 30. Firstly, he took Steve Gotts to task over the question as to who was actually involved in the cleaning-up operation to prepare the former Officers' Club, which was being used as a farm store, for a 'Forties Night' dance that was to be held there (page 52), and then he referred to the description of the scene in the Bermuda Room, in which it was stated that 'of Milly the Mermaid no trace remained; where once she had graced the wall were only a few wisps of sea-bed scenery'. Mr. Thompson commented, 'I would suggest that the only "wisps" Mr. Gotts saw were wisps of imagination, as the original mural had been painted on boards which were fastened to the wall, thus covering the windows on the end wall of the room. These boards were completely removed at the end of the war, leaving nothing but a blank wall. Perhaps Mr. Gotts was using a little "poetic licence", describing the current green mould on the wall as "sea-bed scenery" '.

A point that the trustees of the museum felt needed clarifying was that the museum at Framlingham (located in the renovated former base control tower — see issue 31, page 48) is not one of the links forged by the Friends of the Eighth with American veterans who once flew from airfields in Britain. The independently-run museum is 'dedicated to the men of the 390th' (unfortunately the figures were transposed to 309th in the article) 'who did not return to the US at war's end and remain but statistics in the catalogue of losses incurred by the Eighth Air Force in WWII'. Its collection now contains a detailed enlargement, measuring 3ft by 3ft, of 'the 390th's most famous mural'. 'This', Mr. Thompson added, 'was a mural housed in a building used by over 60 different pilots of the 569th Squadron, (an element of the 390th BG) which once stood close to the control tower on the airfield. This building was unfortunately demolished by the Air Ministry in 1956, but I enclose a photograph of the mural taken in 1953 by Mr. Christopher Elliott . . . This mural was probably the most finely detailed painting of its type attributed to the 8th AF. It was painted by two enlisted men of the 390th BG namely Harry Bookin and John Coban. A panoramic representation of England and most of Europe was depicted in the painting, with Framlingham marked as "Wittans College" (after Col. Edgar Wittan, the first 390th BG commander), the Ruhr is marked as "Happy Valley" and an airfield in France is marked with a large white cross where legend has it that the 390th BG attempted to land, mistaking it for home base in bad weather.'

The 390th BG mural painted by Harry Bookin and John Coban at Framlingham . . . officially vandalised in 1956 (Christopher Elliott).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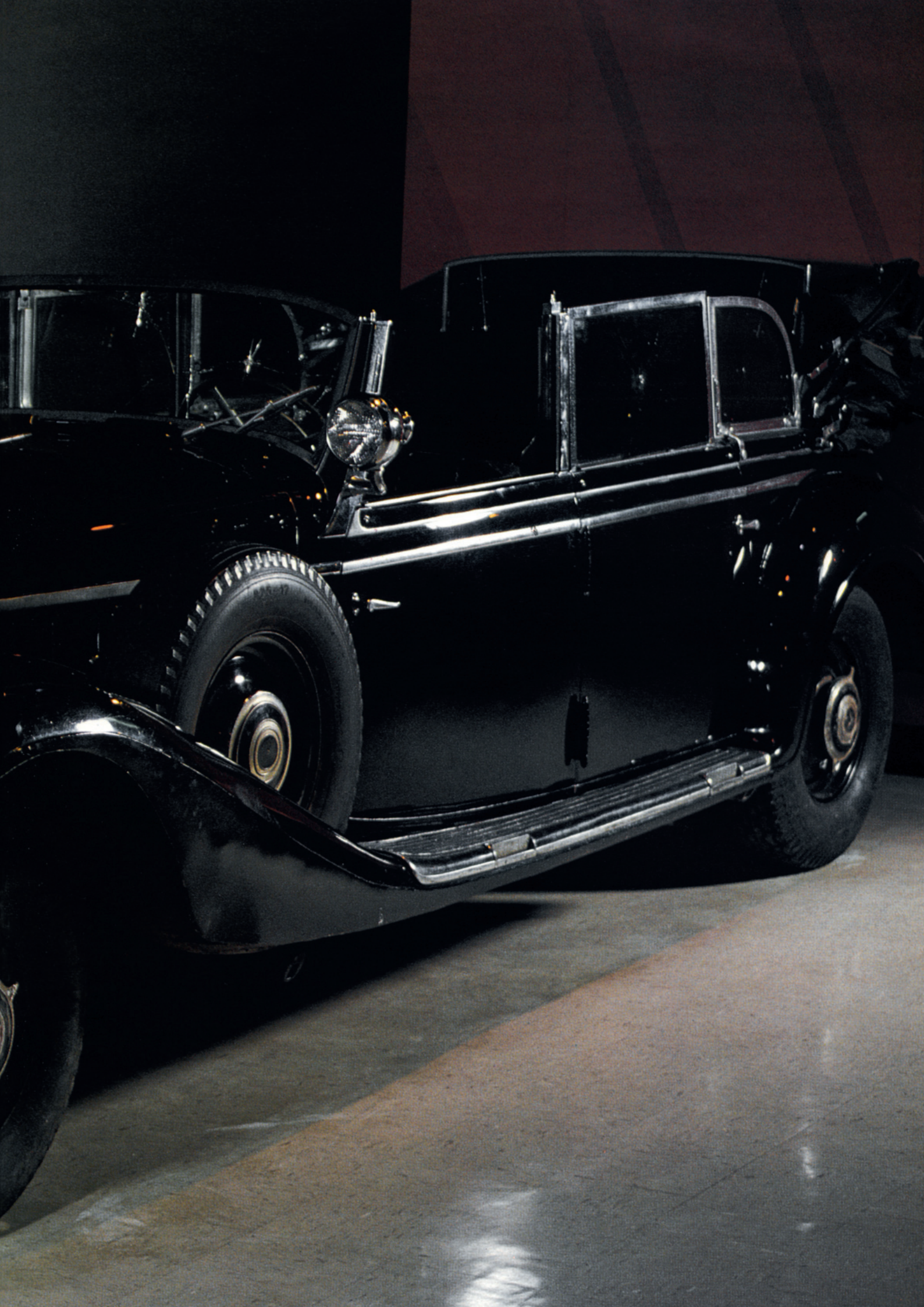


Taken by a German soldier passing along the road beside the Louis Creton farm; this unique picture shows the bodies of the men of the Norfolk Regiment still lying where they had been mown down against the wall of the barn. The photo was sent to the East German publishers of Cyril Jolly's book, Kongress Verlag, and forwarded to the author.

Concerning Obersalzberg (of which a German language translation of No. 9 is on sale in the area), one reader, Karl Goebel of Schwelm, sent us a snapshot that he thought would interest us concerning a visit he made there in August 1934. He wrote that, 'I was then 24 years old and it was in the first days of Hitler's publicity and vacationers from Berchtesgaden took the hike to Obersalzberg to take a glimpse of "The Fuehrer" who used to step down onto the lawn before Haus Wachenfeld (before the reconstruction of the Berghof). Nobody was prevented from taking snapshots and no one at that time had a presentiment of Hitler developing a few years later as one of the greatest criminals of the world. I took a snapshot of a couple of visitors, not anticipating that Dr. Goebbels would bring endless distress some years later.'

Although I do not formally review books in *After the Battle*, I always like to pass on information on new publications that I believe will interest readers, like that on MI5. Also therefore worthy of mention is the fact that Cyril Jolly had such a wide demand for his paperback edition of *The Vengeance of Private Pooley* (on the massacre at Le Paradis in issue No. 15) that he has since had the book reprinted in hardback. Readers interested in obtaining a copy of this really excellent piece of 'after the battle' investigation should send £4.90 (including post) to Cyril Jolly, Teazel Patch, Gressenhall, Dereham, Norfolk.

A real dedicated 'labour of love' has just been produced by Ken Wynn of Auckland, New Zealand, called *A Clasp for 'The Few'*. This is a must for all Battle of Britain devotees for, not only does it cover the lives of all the New Zealand aircrew who fought in the Battle, but Ken initially only produced 750 hard-bound copies. Within ten days of its release in November 1981 the book was a sell out although Ken has kindly held back a few copies of the first numbered edition for our readers. Already therefore a collectors item, the 470-page book is complete with portrait photographs and costs £11.50 plus £1.50 postage. (British postal orders are acceptable in New Zealand.) However, in order to satisfy demand, a paperback edition is being produced which will be available at £9.00 including postage direct from Ken Wynn at PO Box 1382, Auckland, New Zealand.

Dave Collyer, who gave us a lot of help with issue No. 29, has also made his first excursion into print with his *Battle of Britain Diary*, obtainable for £2.80, including post, direct from Dave at 25 Pilot's Avenue, Deal, Kent, CT14 9HQ.

The study of airfields in the United Kingdom, the majority of which were the direct legacy of the Second World War, continues to interest readers, and Barry R. Holliss, who published a *United Kingdom Airfields Register* in 1978 (see No. 25, page 7), has since embarked on an ambitious project: *Military Airfields of the British Isles 1939-1945*. To be produced in alphabetical order. Part One, published in 1981, covers airfields A to E. Thumbnail sketches are included of the layout for each aerodrome together with technical details of the facilities originally constructed. There is an interesting break-down of aerodrome catagories which is most probably a good guide to the overall airfield usage situation in the UK. Fighter Command occupied 21% of the total number of airfields listed; Flying Training Command 20%; Bomber Command 15%; USAAF 12%; Fleet Air Arm 11%; Coastal Command 8%; Transport Command 4%; Maintenance Command 3%; Technical Training Command 2% leaving 4% for miscellaneous uses. Part One, priced at £3.85 including post and packing, is available from Barry R. Holliss, 18 Gun Lane, Sherington, Newport Pagnell, Buckinghamshire, MK16 9PE.

Unfortunately Ian Sayer has had a setback with the publication of his book (see Nazi Gold in issue No. 31), This is now due to appear with a different publisher (Granada) this coming autumn with serialisation rights in *The Sunday Times*. Although a revised title has not finally been agreed, *The Reinhardt Memorandum* would seem to be a possible choice, so look for it under that name.

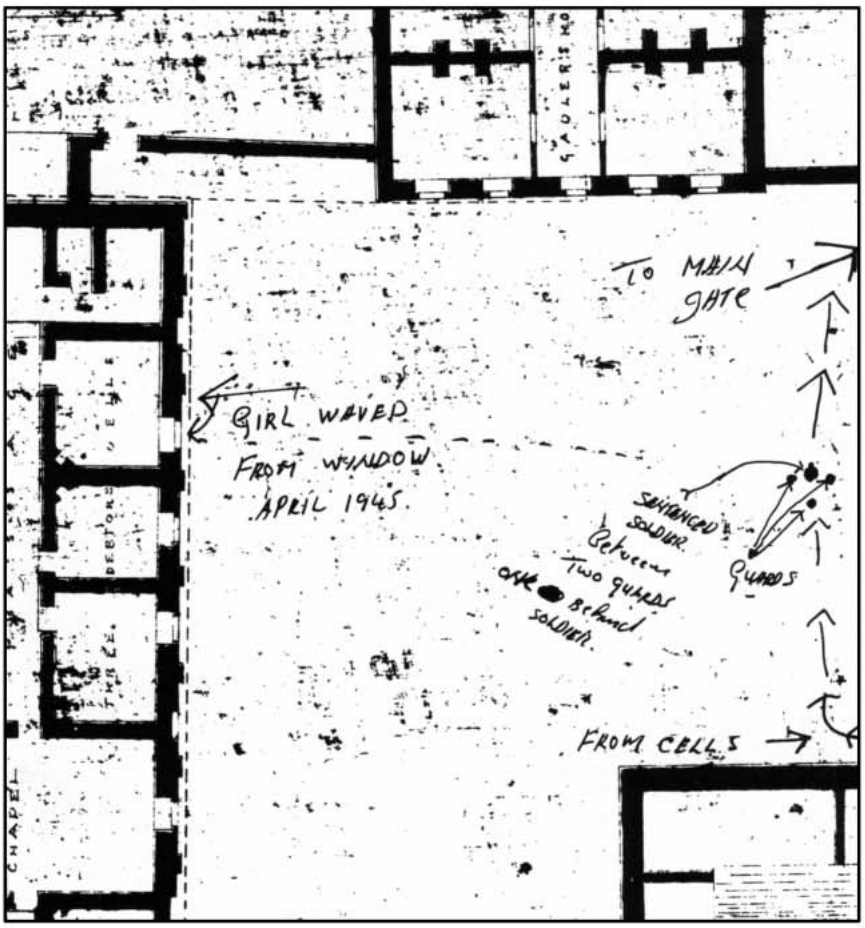
Publication of our latest war book *The War in the Channel Islands — Then and Now* in May 1981, fortunately or unfortunately depending on your point of view, came out coincidentally with the uproar over Solomon Steckoll's 'revelations' over 'Nazi SS atrocities' in the Islands which were serialised in the *Observer*. Mr. Steckoll's newspaper articles, by an amazing piece of bad timing, appeared long before his book was due to be published and, at the time of writing (November 1981) it has still not yet surfaced. Nevertheless, some people confused our book with his and I faced some awkward questions in one radio interview. However, we received a nice plug on BBC Nationwide when they used some photographs from our book on the small screen to introduce an interview with Mr. Steckoll. The *Observer* also used more of *our* pictures to illustrate *his* book!

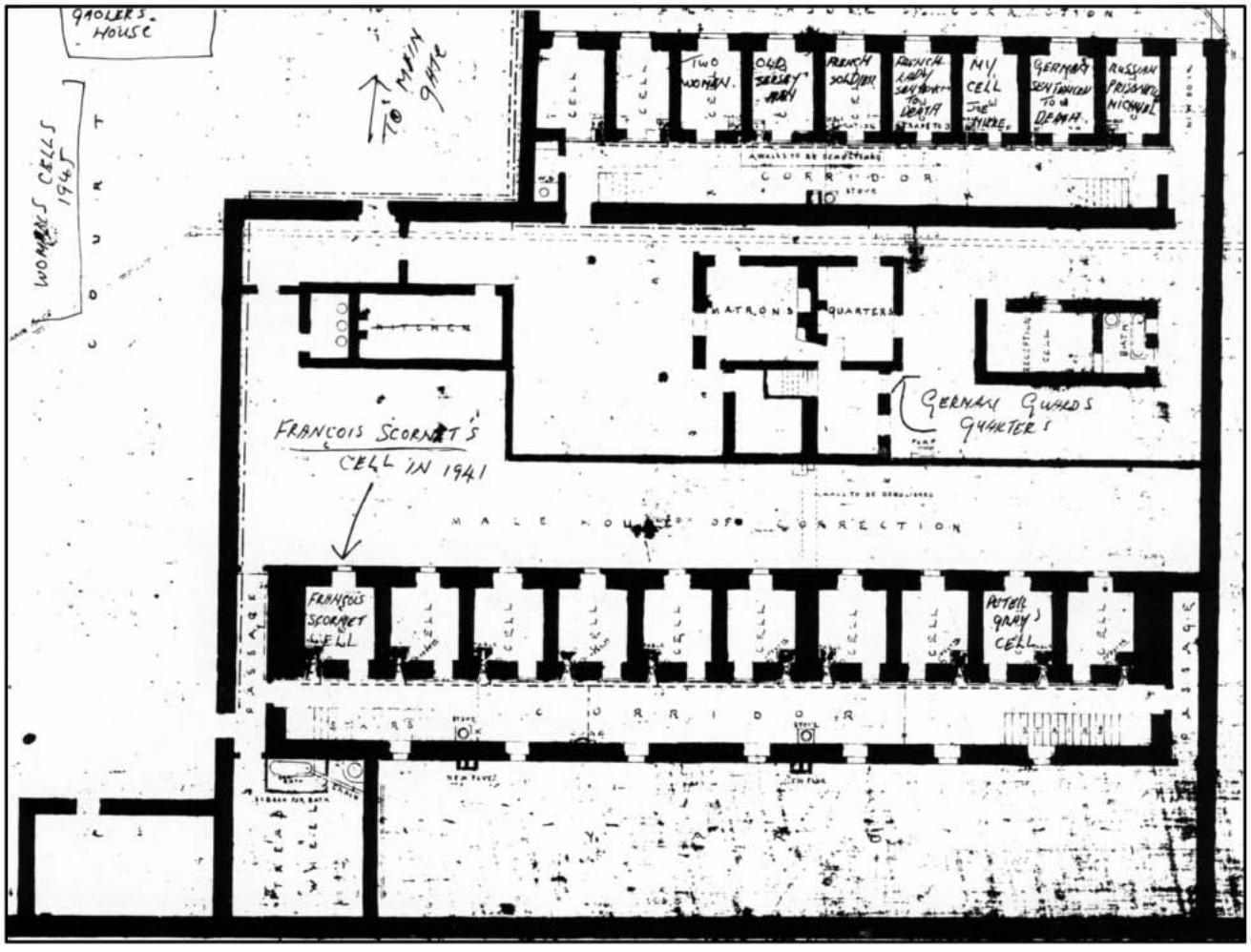
The basic argument centered over whether or not there had been a 'cover up' of the facts surrounding the concentration camps on

Alderney. These days the mere mention of the words 'cover up' sends the media running round in circles and, although the facts of the camps have been known for years, Mr. Steckoll regurgitated it all as if it was an entirely new discovery.

As a result of the impending publication of his book, the man who actually carried out the official investigation into the camps in 1945 (and who helped us with our research), Major 'Bunny' Pantcheff, decided to rush his own, as then unpublished, manuscript into print. *Alderney — Fortress Island* by T. X. H. Pantcheff published by Phillimore & Cory Limited, Shopwyke Hall, Chichester, Sussex (price £1.95), is therefore invaluable for those readers wanting to keep up with the continuing saga.

Immediately following the publication of our Channel Islands' book, a moving personal reminiscence of the occupation was sent to us by Joe Miere, now curator of the underground hospital in Jersey. Joe was imprisoned by the Germans and, as well as sending us this plan of the prison (now demolished), he wrote that, 'one of the last Germans to be shot in Jersey 1945 by the German forces was in the next cell to mine. The day he was sentenced to death he cried all night for his mother. Unable to sleep all night, the poor chap called out: "Mein Mutter! Mein Mutter!". The day they took him out to be shot they passed my window. He pulled back and looked up at his girl's (she was arrested at same time) cell window. The three guards let him call to her and her hand came through her cell window bars and a dirty-white little hanky waved to him. Then the guards pushed him forward (he was handcuffed to two of them). So sad to think that twenty or so minutes later he was dead. I see his ex-girl (the one at the prison window) now and again in town; she is married and has a family'.





In spite of the fact that we have been publishing *After the Battle* for nigh on nine years it is still not easy to find a copy. As Philip Castleta indicated in his letter in September 1981: 'Trying to find a copy of the magazine *After the Battle* for sale in this city (Birmingham) must be just as difficult as your researchers' job in finding the facts for the articles that you publish. In the past I have been loath to order through the local newsagent as he can never spell my surname and my magazines look like a wall in a public toilet covered in graffiti. As for a subscription, which is what I'll have to take out now, the post lady screws everything over four inches wide into a pulp trying to get it through the letter box. . . . This is not the first time I have had to write to a magazine which is difficult to obtain. I know Birmingham is north of Watford but "Brum" is quite a big blob on the map and civilisation is still going on up here. As for the dreaded Post Lady I will be on guard every time my magazine is due, failing that I'm taking the front door off its hinges.'

Wartime relics are part and parcel of *After the Battle* and we learn of the whereabouts of many interesting items in the course of our travels or from letters received. Mr. John M. Potter of Clar Innis, Riverside, Penton Hook, Staines, Middlesex, asked if any of our readers would be interested in an air-sea rescue boat lying at Saunders Marine, Chertsey Lane, Staines. If any society is interested Mr. Genet is the man to contact. Also Mr. Potter himself has two transmitters, Type T1154N, which he would be willing to donate to anyone renovating a wartime bomber providing he can look at the restoration.

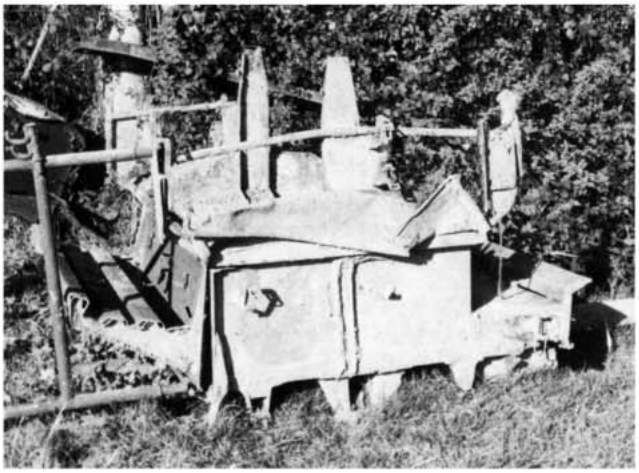
The star performer on the war relic scene, and the one who still receives the most fan mail, is Alain Roudeix of Vimoutiers, France (issue No. 8). Readers will remember from issue No. 25 that he had discovered the location of a huge pit dug by French engineers to bury mountains of war material from the Falaise battlefield. He still has not disclosed its precise location but we visited Alain recently to see how he was getting on with his secret 'trou'. Further gems recovered are illustrated here.

At the time of writing (November 1981), assembly of the Spur Battery gun at Duxford Airfield, whose dismantling was described in No. 33, is well advanced. The job of constructing the concrete base and putting all the pieces back together again was entrusted to 34 Squadron of the 39th Engineer Regiment based at Waterbeach, Cambridgeshire, led by Captain Mungo Melvin while being advised by Mr. John Lee, Instructor of Gunnery on Gibraltar from 1949-51.

Mr. H. R. Yates of Victoria, London, wrote on the same subject in August 1981 to correct a couple of errors:

'Firstly, in the Royal Artillery, we never had gun crews, only gun detachments. Secondly, Terry Gander (our author) states "The gun housing was a World War II addition to provide cover for the crew against aircraft attack." This is incorrect. I was told shortly after my arrival in Gib that the Mk 7 mountings of Lord Airey's, O'Hara's and Spur batteries had been installed in 1934, and early 1935, replacing the old Mk 5 mounting. As the turret-like shield was peculiar to the Mk 7 mounting only, it follows that it was installed in 1935 and not during the war. In any case I can clearly remember visiting the top of the Rock on various occasions and seeing the shield. The pictures on page 50 of the interior of the turret clearly show the general layout and also the hydraulic pipes, etc., which were a feature of the Mk 7 mounting only, and not the Mk 5. Elevating, traversing, and ramming were all done by hand on the Mk 5. In any case Terry correctly states that the mounting was a Mk 7 with a serial number of 10. All other 9.2-inch batteries there had Mk 5 mountings, and these are the ones which would have had the extra protective shield added during the war. You had a most excellent picture showing the layout of these guns in your issue No. 21, so I won't name them.'

After the Falaise pocket had been closed, much battle debris was got rid of by the simple expedient of burying it. Today Alain Roudeix is excavating one such pit and these illustrations give some idea of his recent finds. The field kitchen was found complete with coffee — ersatz of course!



In No. 33 we described our surprise discovery of abandoned material in the tunnels below the St. Malo Citadel. During our short visit we did not have time for much exploration but the evidence looked so interesting that the Jersey branch of the Channel Islands Occupation Society decided to mount a special operation to scour the stygian depths. Five members made a return trip on August 9, 1981 and spent more than two hours underground. Interesting discoveries were a small petrol locomotive, complete with carriages, and a 4.7cm Pak K36(t). One gallery was about three times the size of any of those in the underground hospital in Jersey.

Mr. G. B. Towns wrote from Kenilworth, Warwickshire, to tell us of a visit he had made to southern Germany:

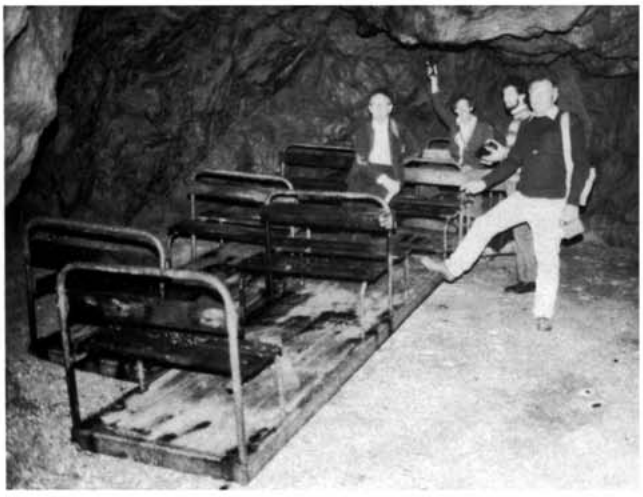
'I thought you may be interested to know that I got to Obersalzberg as planned. Unfortunately, it had been raining for a number of days previous to my visit and the track through the undergrowth to the site of the Berghof was, to say the least, very muddy. However, I found it OK and managed to take some photographs and actually climbed into the garage via the window space. The whole area is very much overgrown now and I think that in a few years time it would be difficult to locate. I was unable to go up to the Eagles Nest as it was closed to the public for a few days as some company were making a film at the top but, in any case, I could not have seen much as the clouds were down to the ground level, even making normal photography very difficult in the whole area.

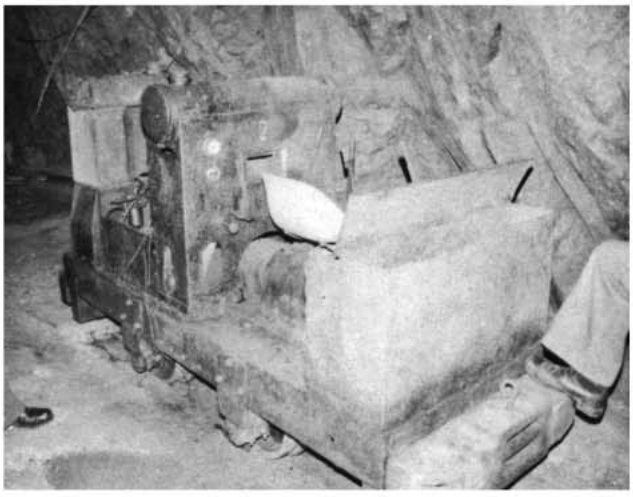
'The visit to Dachau left everlasting impressions on myself and brother-in-law (both ex-army war service). No amount of photographs or books can convey the actual terrible happenings in that place unless one stands in the middle of the compound and visualises the surroundings. No wonder people were crying as they walked over the site.'

I found Mr. Towns account of his feelings, especially as those of an ex-serviceman, very interesting. I must admit that Dachau made very little impact on me — possibly because I have visited so many other tragic sites over the past ten years — and that the immaculate compound of today seemed to bear little relation to its squalor during the war. Personally I always find that a derelict, abandoned or forgotten corner of the battlefield, where perhaps someone died alone, the extent of whose suffering is unknown and unrecorded, means more than all the pristine memorials or preserved buildings crowded with camera-clicking sightseers.

It was a reader from Richmond, British Columbia — Derek MacLean — who informed us of a small yet significant loss in Bastogne. Reference to our issue No. 4 page 8

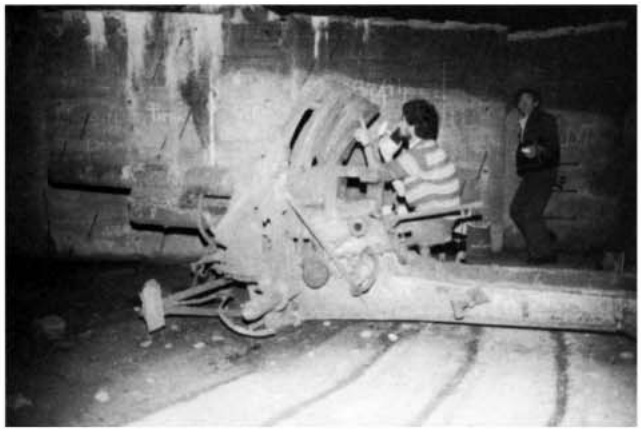
St. Malo citadel underground tour. *Above:* **The capturers and the captured after the battle (US Army).** *Below:* **The accommodation is somewhat dilapidated but still in existence in several of the galleries used as quarters. All pictures courtesy of the Channel Islands Occupation Society, Jersey.**





This small petrol engine and the 'toast-rack' carriages for the 60cm railway still await their passengers. Michael Ginns comments that the ventilation system must have been very good to have used a petrol loco in the enclosed tunnel system.

Several guns still remain to be seen within their bricked-up emplacements. *Above left:* **A 4.7cm Pak K36 (t) anti-tank gun — most likely the only surviving example of its type still in its original position.** *Above right:* **The remains of a 7.5cm Pak 40 — the breech-block has been blown off.** *Below:* **At least four 10cm field guns — possibly of Belgian origin — were discovered.**



will show a building on the corner of the Place General McAuliffe on which, in 1973, one could still read the original German road directions painted on the wall. When Derek reached the spot in 1980 he found the building razed and was just in time to picture the empty site before it was redeveloped. He also reported that vandals have been at work on the Panther at Grandmenil removing the front 'fender' and bearing cap on the left idler wheel.

May 1981 saw the announcement of an important new war museum when Lewes District Council agreed to contribute £100,000 towards the project put forward by a private company to restore the near-derelict 19th Century coastal fort at Newhaven.

Newhaven Fort, set on the clifftop at the entrance to the port of Newhaven, was built in the 1860s. Lord Palmerston had directed the construction of seventy-two coastal forts, of which Newhaven was one, around south-east England to protect the country against the threat of French invasion. The fort at Newhaven covers some ten acres and comprises a central parade ground with perimeter casemates which provided quarters for officers and men, underground passages and rooms, surrounding ramparts with gun emplacements on the seaward side and a moat on the landward side.

From its completion in 1870 until the outbreak of war in 1914 it was used as a training base and garrison for regular soldiers. At the turn of the century, new artillery was installed and considerable improvement works were carried out. After the 1914-18 war its role as a defensive position declined and it became a large gun-mounting platform. During the Second World War further additions to the structure were made, the armaments were updated and additional guns were mounted on Castle Hill to the west of the fort.

After the war a token peacetime garrison remained until 1956 when coastal artillery defences were disbanded. It remained in Government ownership until 1962 when it was handed over to the former Newhaven District Council. After exploring a number of options for its future use, the Newhaven Council leased the fort and adjoining land for residential development which was ultimately restricted to the lower adjoining slopes. The fort itself remained unoccupied and unused, and the succeeding years took a severe toll on the fabric, largely as a result of vandalism and thoughtless destruction.

In 1979, the Lewes District Council as succeeding owners, regained the site of the Fort from the lessees and in the same year the Department of the Environment scheduled it as an Ancient Monument. Respecting this and the local desires to see the fort made available to the public, the Lewes District Council considered a number of options but resolved that it should aim for the progressive restoration of the fort to its 1870 condition

The passing years have taken their toll in Bastogne — painted German road signs disappeared with the demolition of this building (Derek MacLean).

and open it to the public. To achieve this it was recognised that the Council could not "go it alone" but would need to involve private enterprise and finance. Such private involvement, however, would need to ensure that public amenity and leisure use would be paramount and any new activities introduced would be housed within the restored structure with its historical features remaining the dominant features.

Although a number of private concerns showed interest in the fort, only one has retained and developed this interest. From mid-1980 the Council held detailed discussions with the directors of The Fort (Newhaven) Limited and these culminated in the Council accepting the company's proposal to take a lease of the fort and carry out restoration and development for leisure and amenity purposes. The restoration works are to be carried out by Thorpe Brothers — a Brighton based building firm.

The Fort (Newhaven) Limited intend to restore the Fort and create an atmosphere where the architecture and setting combine, and can be enjoyed by everyone. They intend to create a very comprehensive museum, featuring both the maritime and military history of Newhaven and the surrounding area. The museum will also feature changing displays, and special exhibitions from time to time. It is hoped to set up a full audio visual and tape/slide presentation facility, where films on the history of the fort and other relevant lectures can be carried out.

Leisure and recreation will be the main emphasis of the fort company, with plenty to do and see for all the family. There will be guided tours around the fort, both above and below ground, showing the many tunnels, and passages, as well as underground rooms. The intention is also to restore the gun emplacements and, hopefully, replace the type of coastal guns as used in the last war. It is planned to complete the first stage of restoration and open the fort to the public by late Spring 1982.

As for my mistakes, several readers pointed out to me that the 'Sherman' on page 53 of No. 31 is really a Canadian-built Ram. To single out one letter, Mr. B. Barbic of Salisbury, Wiltshire, explained that the majority of the Rams sent to Britain were used to equip the Canadian 4th and 5th Armoured Divisions. Many were later converted to Kangaroos (the tanks not the men) by removing the turrets so that they became personnel carriers.

Another tank that aroused the interest of several readers was that pictured on the cover of No. 32. Robin Harvan sent us a letter from Spring, Texas, in which he said that he believed the Sherman tank in the picture is a rarity. 'The mantlet, armor on glacis plate, and lack of driving lights indicate this is the "Jumbo" assault tank (M4A3E2). This vehicle was developed as an up-armored vehicle to counter the Panther's 75mm gun and the Tiger's 88mm gun. This vehicle was classified "limited standard" and comparatively few (only 254) were produced.'

Then Robin took me to task on two errors in the story of the recovery of the Spitfire from a Calais beach (also in issue No. 32): 'In the movie *The Great Escape*, the role of Roger Bushell was played by Sir (then Mr.) Richard Attenborough. David McCallum played an officer from the Fleet Air Arm. Also P/O Cazenove was not in the Auxiliary Air Force; he was RAF Volunteer Reserve. Two facts tell us this: were he Auxiliary, he would have been in an auxiliary unit (a squadron numbered in the 600 series) but, more importantly, his photograph on page 13 clearly shows VR (Volunteer Reserve) initials on his lapels. In 1940, the VR was used to fill out regular and auxiliary squadrons, so his being in No. 92 Squadron is logical.'

Coming from our American friend that is, as my geometry master used to say, QED!

The first stages in the restoration of Newhaven fort are already underway in what is eventually seen as £¼ million project supported locally by £100,000 from Lewes District Council and nationally by the Department of the Environment to the tune of £25,000. The fort already boasts its own Churchill tank — an apt acquisition as the Canadians used the fort as a base for the Dieppe raid in 1942.

Finally it is always a very sad duty for me to have to report the deaths of those who have helped us in our research but news of the loss of Mike Ross in April 1981 was difficult to believe. The death of a young person is all the more tragic and especially so when he or she is at the height of creativity. As the driving force, it was Mike's enthusiasm that created Military Marine and latterly Quartermaster at the Angel, dealing in all forms of wartime clothing and militaria in the widest sense; and the formation of the Battle Re-enactment Associate (see issue No. 24 where Mike is featured on the cover). From his early years as a salvage diver, through his interest in the Old West and the Remuda Western Club, to the late 1960s when the interest in WWII militaria really began to escalate, Mike was a 'character' who will be remembered for a long time to come.

Five months later, in September 1981, came the death of one of WWII's most influential men — Albert Speer. In latter years, no television documentary on the war would be complete without the 'talking head' of Herr Speer who was released in 1966 after serving a full term of twenty years for war crimes. We first made contact with him in 1973 during the preparation of our feature on Nuremburg (issue No. 2) and, although he was tied by a strict contract with his German publishers not to communicate with or assist other publications in any way, he was always courteous and helpful. Our first meeting with him was in Heidelberg in 1974 when we went over the route taken by Hitler when he visited Paris in 1940 (issue No. 14) for which Speer acted as his guide. Ironically he died in the country which he had once worked so hard to destroy: after collapsing at the Park Court Hotel at London's Lancaster Gate he died in St. Mary's Hospital, Paddington.

Another loss was that of Gordon H. Hunsberger of Gilbertsville, Pennsylvania. Gordon will not be known to readers but he was the guiding light behind the creation of the 355th Fighter Group Association. When we visited Steeple Morden aerodrome in 1977 during our research for *Airfields of the Eighth — Then and Now*, we were told of the donation by the Jarman family of a small corner of the unit's former base for the erection of a memorial. Its dedication took place in May 1978 and I was asked by the East Anglian Aviation Society to produce and present framed photographs of the airfield to Gordon who was there with a small handful of former 355th veterans. I also laid on a surprise low-level beat up of the airfield by our Fairchild. From that first small beginning, Gordon's tireless efforts increased membership of the fledgling Association and a new memorial was conceived for Steeple Morden to be dedicated to honour those who had lost their lives in the war effort and to remember those who had passed on since. Gordon had arranged for the memorial to be dedicated on May 12, 1981, and news of his untimely death shocked association members just as they were preparing to set out for England. In the words of his In Memoriam notice: 'It will appear to take on an even greater significance now, for it was through Gordon's nearly single-handed efforts, his tireless drive, that this tribute is about to become a reality.'

Mike Ross, creator of the Battle Re-enactment Associate, helped me stage this scenario within the perimeter of the Royal Small Arms Factory at Enfield Lock (see After the Battle No. 2) for a Plaistow Pictorial poster.

In May 1978 I had the pleasure of presenting Gordon Hunsberger framed photographs of Steeple Morden 'then and now' at the 355th's first small reunion. Sadly he never lived to see the dedication of the memorial he worked so hard to create.

Investigation No. 1

BY GARY EMMS

Many readers of *After the Battle* have been encouraged by our own adventures to undertake their own research projects. One of the most ambitious was that of Ian Sayer reported in Issue 31, but many others come to our notice and, until now, the majority have remained unpublished. The purpose of this new feature 'Readers' Investigations' is therefore to make amends and to provide a forum for your reports. These should be accompanied by photographs (not Instamatic please) and maps where appropriate. Gary Emms of Monmouth, Gwent, South Wales, sets the ball rolling with a story concerning aviation in his area.

SEPTEMBER 12/13, 1940

On the starless, densely overcast night of Thursday, September 12/13, 1940, seventeen Dornier bombers from Fliegerkorps IV Kampfgeschwader 606, based in northern France, were engaged in a bombing operation over north-west England, their prime target being Liverpool docks which were hit between 9.11 p.m. and 10.10 p.m. Incendiaries were also dropped over Swansea, Bideford, Bristol and Exeter.

Meanwhile, between 11.20 p.m. and 3.25 a.m., nine Heinkel He 111s from Luftflotten 3, Kampfgeschwader 27 'Boelcke', based at Rennes, were carrying out a series of Storangriffen (nuisance operations) over Birmingham, Bristol, Plymouth, Swansea and Liverpool. As the original KG27 debriefing reports were either lost or destroyed, there is unfortunately no way of telling the time at which each aircraft carried out its appropriate bombing mission (such operations were conducted either solo or in pairs). However, surviving Luftwaffe documents disclose that intense anti-aircraft fire was reported over Liverpool at 4,000 to 7,000 metres while there was very little searchlight activity due to the extremely bleak weather conditions. At 00.40 a.m. on Friday morning, Monmouthshire ARP Main Control received its first air raid message: CONDITION RED.

Meanwhile, twenty-two-year-old Police Constable Cox, who had been on night duty from 10.00 p.m., was returning from supper at the police headquarters to his patrol in the lower section of Commercial Road, Newport. At approximately 3.25 a.m. the unmistakable throbbing of a twin-engined German aircraft

Top: **The morning after the night before! Wreckage of the Heinkel outside No. 32 Stow Park Avenue, Newport, Monmouthshire.** *Above:* **The spot where five people — three crewmen and two children — lost their lives four decades before.**

broke the uneasy silence of the night air. Standing near the police pillar on the Kingsway and Commercial Street junction, the ever-increasing drone from the aircraft's engines made it plainly obvious to PC Cox that it was in trouble and rapidly losing height. Thinking that it could come crashing down within the immediate vicinity, he instantly notified police HQ about the situation by telephone, then quickly found his way to some nearby Anderson shelters in George Street. Standing by the entrance to one such shelter he waited for the inevitable. Suddenly there was a red flash which lit up the western skyline, followed by a terrific explosion. PC Cox hurried from his temporary refuge and made straight to the police telephone, informing headquarters that an aircraft had crashed in the area of the Royal Gwent Hospital and that he was now heading in that direction to investigate. He had not gone one hundred yards up the road, when something made him hesitate at the entrance to Queens Street. It was a bleak, moonless night and, what with the black-out regulations, visibility was down to a minimum, yet in the darkness his eyes focused on something 'white' sprawled across the road, just in front of the British Legion Club (which still stands today). With his sole companions, a hooded torch and a special police issue Webley and Scott .45 semi-automatic, he moved towards the vaguely luminous white object for a closer inspection. Throwing a beam of light from his torch on to the object, he could see that it was in fact an open parachute with the figure of an airman, dressed in a one-piece flying suit, half-conscious and obviously injured, still connected to the harness. Not positively knowing the identity of the stricken airman PC Cox bent over the body and unzipped his flying suit revealing the dark blue uniform and various insignia of a German pilot.

By now civilians from the surrounding houses began to emerge. 'I looked out of my bedroom window and heard what I thought at first to be the heavy breathing of a horse in distress, then I saw the figure of a man lying in the road' (extract from the South Wales Argus 13/9/40). The pilot was cut loose by Mr. Dennis Daily and taken to a nearby house where he was offered a drink. Soon Home Guard and military authorities arrived to take over responsibility for the situation. The pilot, Oberleutnant Harry Wappler, was taken away for treatment to his right arm which had been broken in three places.

At precisely 03.43 a.m. the following ARP report was given:

'Post 35 reports plane appeared to crash after circling around Basseleg area about ¼ hour ago in direct line over Ridgeway from Post. Reflection of fire in sky. Incident also reported by Post 33.'

The aircraft in question was a Heinkel He 111P, serial number 2670 and fuselage code designation 1G+DS, a variant of the basic design which usually carried a crew of five. Taking into account the time of the crash, approximately 3.30 a.m., the time at which the raids had officially ceased, 3.25 a.m., and several eyewitness accounts which state that the aircraft was definitely in trouble and possibly on fire, it would seem logical to assume that the raider was returning late from a more south-westerly target, i.e. either Swansea or Bristol, crippled by AA fire and hopelessly lost. Either way, the aircraft was in fact brought down by a mobile barrage balloon cable anchored in Bell View Park by No. 966 Balloon Squadron (later to have been described as having balloons of a special type flying higher than usual), although another eye-witness account claims that the bomber was flying at an approximate altitude of 400 yards. This statement could account for the fact that the pilot (the sole survivor), realising his dangerously low position, baled out before catching the balloon cable to land less than a mile away in Queens Street.

Oberleutnant Harry Wappler, the pilot, landed roughly where the manhole cover lies in the middle of the road.

In the early hours of Friday, September 13, the following ARP report was given:

'0400: An enemy plane has crashed on No. 31 Stow Park Avenue. One parachutist baled out and picked up in Queens Street and taken to Royal Gwent Hospital. No particulars of any other occupants.

The aircraft had, in fact, crashed into No. 32 Stow Park Avenue (contradictory to the official ARP report), the house of Mr. and Mrs. Phillips, a well-known Jewish businessman who owned a tobacconist and newsagent shop in Dock Street, Newport. The aircraft, carrying incendiaries, ploughed into the lower half of the house where the two children, Malcolm, 17, and Myrtle, 14, slept as a precaution against air raids. It exploded and caught fire on impact, hurling pieces of flaming debris across the drive. One wing was torn off, possibly by the balloon cable, while a maid asleep in the large house next door (No. 31) woke to find pieces of wreckage strewn across her bedroom.

Malcolm burst into his parents' room shouting: 'Mum, the house is on fire!' Unable to follow their son, who had rushed back into the flames in search of his sister, Mr. and Mrs. Phillips managed to escape the raging inferno by knotting bed sheets together and climbing down from an upstairs window. Once outside, Mr. Phillips smashed the library window and re-entered the house in a desperate bid to save his two children but was driven back by the terrific heat. With badly burned arms he then rushed round to the back of the house where he was finally restrained by firemen and taken to hospital.

However, one cannot get away from the fact that this story is an ironic double tragedy, for Mr. and Mrs. Phillips were dedicated pacifists. In fact so great were their moral convictions and hatred of war that, although their two children had been killed, they even managed to find the strength to visit the 28-year-old Oberleutnant in hospital to re-assure him that the incident was not his fault but part of the many horrific injustices of war.

Harry Wappler was later sent to the prisoner-of-war camp at Llanmartin and remained a PoW until his release on November 14, 1946. His compatriots, later identified as Oberfeldwebel Johannes Elster, Unteroffizier Fritz Berndt and Unteroffizier Herbert Okuneck, were buried at daybreak in St. Woolos Cemetery. As far as I can ascertain, no shots were fired over their graves or flags draped over their coffins; as Mr. Right who was on the burial detail puts it: 'Discretion seemed to be the keynote.'

With the establishment of the German War Cemetery at Cannock Chase the bodies were exhumed and reburied in Block 7, Graves 294, 295 and 296 respectively.

SACRED TO THE BELOVED MEMORY OF
MYRTLE
MALCOLM
PHILLIPS
BORN 16 MAY 1926
KILLED BY A FALLING
GERMAN AEROPLANE
13 SEPTEMBER 1940 - IO ELUL 5700
THEY WERE LOVELY AND PLEASANT IN THEIR LIVES
AND IN DEATH THEY WERE NOT DIVIDED

Seventeen-year-old Malcolm gave his life to save his 14-year-old sister Myrtle. They now lie together in Jews Wood next to St. Woolos Cemetery.

REACH FOR THE SKY

BY TREVOR POPPLE

The story of Sir Douglas Bader's life and career is a well known one due to the successful biography *Reach for the Sky* by Paul Brickhill which was followed by the equally successful film of the same name, starring Kenneth More in the lead role.

During 1981, a new biography called *Flying Colours*, written by P. B. 'Laddie' Lucas was published, and this book illustrates Bader's life up to the present day. It also delves deeper into the man's personality but, most importantly, it presents a convincing case for the defence against the criticism levelled at Bader over the years by various writers regarding the 'Big Wing' controversy. At worst, he has been accused by some of being partly responsible for the removal of Sir Hugh Dowding from his position as AOC Fighter Command, and also the removal of Air Vice-Marshal Keith Park as No. 11 Group Commander after the Battle of Britain. At best, he has been described as an unwitting pawn in a larger political manoeuvre by Air Vice-Marshal Trafford Leigh-Mallory, the AOC of No. 12 Group. The detail of that argument, which has been fought over for the last forty-odd years, is outside the confines of this narrative; however, *Flying Colours* also sheds light on Sir Douglas Bader's attitude to the film adaption of the original biography.

Top: **In characteristic pose, Kenneth More portrays the legless Douglas Badar at Kenley. Although this is a publicity still taken on the NW-SE runway looking north to simulate the North Weald Victory Flypast scene, it shows the Spitfires quite well. Readily identified is 'TE425', really TE456, and the second from the left is possibly 'TR627', actually SL745, one of the unserviceable aircraft used as 'set dressing'.** *Right:* **The real Douglas Bader talking with the Director of Photography, Jack Asher.**

First published in 1954, Brickhill's book leaves Bader in 1949 as a decorated war hero, a successful executive, a championship golfer, and committed to helping people with similar leg injuries overcome their common problems.

Daniel M. Angel was not the only person to realise the immense possibilities that the book held as a potential screenplay. However, whilst other producers came to the same conclusion by reading it, Angel went ahead and beat them to the screen rights. He paid £15,000 on hearsay alone, and then sat back and read it.

During the war Danny had attained the rank of major while serving with the army in India, but contracted polio and as a result lost the use of both legs. Invalided out of the service, his assets totalled £125.

His first film was a documentary called *All the King's Horses*, and to make it he had to borrow £2,000. In 1952 he teamed up with director Lewis Gilbert to produce the feature film *Albert RN*, released in 1953. By that time they were already preparing their next production, a naval war drama called *The Sea Shall Not Have Them*.

The pair came together again to put *Reach for the Sky* on the screen, and it was decided that Angel would produce it and Gilbert would direct and write the screenplay. Angel's faith in the project was total and he probably drew parallels with his own infirmity and his determination to override it, with Bader's same tough attitude towards conquering the loss of his legs.

Having secured the screen rights, his director, and set the script in motion, Angel moved on to the problem of casting the central character of the film — Douglas Bader. He was positive that he needed an actor with international status to ensure the production's success, and presumably to add weight when trying to get the money for the budget from the Rank Organisation.

On holiday in France, Kenneth More *(see After the Battle No. 17)* was reading Paul Brickhill's book and he, too, was not slow to realise the book's cinema potential. In his own autobiography *Happy Go Lucky*, published in 1959, he wrote: 'I read the book from cover to cover, then read it again. At each reading I became more firmly convinced that the book ought to be a film. And I felt in my bones that I was the only man who could play Bader properly. . . . The part was obviously such a difficult challenge that it scared me a little. It was far broader and deeper than anything I had ever attempted before. It ranged from tragedy to comedy, from the amputation of Bader's legs to the time he goes on parade in a bowler with a torn top, stamps to attention and the flap pops up. Nevertheless Bader reared before me as a mountain that demanded to be climbed.'

More contacted his agent, Harry Dubens, who immediately called Danny Angel. However, Angel turned More down as the part had already been offered to Richard Burton.

On his return to England, though disappointed at this initial setback, More nevertheless remained convinced that Douglas Bader was *his* part. So much so, that he went around stating his conviction openly: 'I said it in a London club one day and a friend of Danny Angel's overheard me. He immediately rang and told Danny of the conversation, and when Danny went home in the evening he mentioned it to his wife. By yet another extraordinary coincidence, Danny's wife is Betty, the daughter of Vivian Van Damm. She remembered me at once from the old Windmill days. It's fourteen years since you last saw Kenny,' she said. 'Why not look him up?'

'Danny rang Harry', wrote More. 'When Harry lifted the telephone and putting his hand over the mouthpiece, whispered to me: "It's Danny Angel!" my heart missed a beat. I guessed what might be in the wind.'

For some reason Burton was no longer in the running. Whether he refused the part or, as some sources report, did not get a proper chance to read the script is not known. What is absolutely certain is that Kenneth More got the part of Douglas Bader. Dubens and Angel settled the deal over lunch and he was signed up for £25,000, his highest fee yet.

Meanwhile Lewis Gilbert got down to the task of transforming Brickhill's book into a workable screenplay. The book spanned a period of forty years in 372 pages but the focal point, as far as Angel and Gilbert were concerned, was the crucial period in which Bader learned to fly, crashed, and then began the gruelling struggle to be accepted as 'normal' despite the awful loss of his legs. Also portrayed would be Bader's career through the war climaxing with him leading the 1945 Victory Flypast, depicting the ultimate triumph over his disability.

Of necessity, as with any true story that is transferred to the screen, some of the sequences had to be highlighted or compressed or even transposed for artistic reasons. In addition the book referred to many people who had passed through Bader's life, and it would have been impossible to include them all. To have done so would have (a) confused the audience with the multitude of different characters, and (b) produced a cast list so long that it would have been unviable for both dramatic and financial reasons.

Probably the most affected person was Bader himself. He was very anxious and critical about the short cast list and only accepted it under stubborn protest. He was very keen for all the real life characters important to the story to be portrayed. He was deeply worried and embarrassed by the changes in the screenplay and the possible reactions of the real people concerned when they saw the completed film. By all accounts he nearly drove Angel to the brink of total exasperation with his criticisms and protestations; to the point where Angel was forced to appeal to Bader's family and friends to intervene.

Key figures in Bader's life were included in the script, but one of the principle supporting characters, 'Johny Sanderson', was created due to the need to reshape the story in some areas, and to aid continuity. The 'Sanderson' part was primarily based upon Geoffrey Stephenson, a contemporary and friend of Bader's at Cranwell, and later at No. 231 Squadron and No. 19 Squadron. Within this part were encompassed many other people. For example, the film shows 'Sanderson' breaking the news to Bader about the amputation of his other leg. In reality, Bader was told by Squadron Leader Woollett, the CO of No. 23 Squadron. To have portrayed this would have meant the introduction of a new character for one scene which, in dramatic terms, was a very important one. With 'Sanderson' doing it as his old friend from the Cranwell days, it added to the already highly charged atmosphere of the moment.

'Sanderson' also gave a narration over a lot of the sequences. This was necessary, especially during the hospital scenes, to describe the duration and extent of the anguish and suffering, and near demise, that Bader experienced. The narration also explained the tedium of Bader's civilian employment compared with the euphoria of squadron life, and later the background to the wartime aerial sequences to give the audience greater insight into the combat tactics in which Bader was directly involved. Without this the air battles might have appeared as just exciting combat footage lacking any context.

Having accepted the part, Kenneth More encountered considerable opposition from friends and associates. They said that he was heading for disaster and told him that, 'to play a man with no legs who is still living is wrong. It's utterly disgraceful!' Sir Alexander Korda, to whom More was contracted, was utterly appalled, and asked him: 'You are a young man with legs yet you want to be a man without them?' By all accounts even Sir Laurence Olivier was shocked and posed the question: 'How can you possibly hope to play a legless man convincingly on the screen?'

After days and nights of worry, More made up his mind to go ahead with the film despite the opposition and arranged to meet Douglas Bader. They first met over lunch and talked for about two hours. This was followed by an invitation to play golf at Gleneagles and More took along a friend (Ronnie Squire) for moral support. These were the only meetings the two men had prior to the shooting of the film and Bader, with a deep generalised mistrust of the film industry, found in More a man he could trust and came to regard him as an ally. His acceptance of Kenneth More tempered his fear that he would be made to look unreal or absurd on the screen. He said to More: 'I know you'll do a good job and do your best to stop them making a complete balls of it.' Of the meeting at Gleneagles, More wrote: 'In every respect (it) was well worthwhile. . . . I managed to absorb a lot of the feeling of Bader — his toughness, his driving force, his egotism, his breeziness and the twinkle in his eyes when he gets his own way.'

Reproducing Douglas Bader's walk called for considerable preparation. On the train coming back from Gleneagles More practised the imitation up and down the corridor of the carriage: 'I tried to do it simply by locking my knees — but it just didn't work.' He visited Queen Mary's Hospital at Roehampton, in south-west London, where Bader went: 'The experts there devised a special contraption of steel plates and straps that locked the joints of my feet, kept my knees rigid and extended right up to my hips to give me a rolling gait. It looked like something out of a mediaeval torture chamber, but it fitted and worked from the first try-on though I'd have hardly have called it comfortable.'

Even with the assistance of the 'mediaeval contraption' he still felt that something was lacking. More went to Danny Angel for advice: 'When you are trying to walk, remember that there is no pain in your legs. You can't feel them at all. But imagine that every time you want to bring your left foot up to your right there's a million tons pressing against it. You've got to act a crippled man's walk with your eyes,' he said. Towards the end of filming, More was to dispense with the harness as he had come to master Bader's walk without it, although Clyde Jeavons in his book, *'A Pictorial History of War Films*, claims '. . . according to Bader himself, (More) exaggerated his limp rather insultingly.'

Kenley

The production company (registered as Pinnacle Productions) arranged to hire Pinewood Studios at Iver in Buckinghamshire together with all its back-up facilities. The studios and back lots were to be used from the beginning of October 1955 for about seven or eight weeks but first the many exterior sequences had to be filmed during the summer period when hopefully the English weather would be relatively pleasant.

Clearly the most important locations were those chosen to film the RAF sequences. Whether or not Kenley aerodrome was specifically requested or merely the location offered by the Air Ministry and RAF is not known.

Kenley in 1955 was a much altered place compared with the Kenley of the early thirties remembered by Douglas Bader. No more was it a grass field with a white landing circle and small silver biplanes. In preparation for war in the late thirties, two concrete runways had been laid, together with a perimeter track and twelve blast-proof pens each able to accommodate two aircraft. As Sector B HQ forming part of No. 11 Group defending the south of England, Kenley was a prime target for enemy attention and this came with a vengeance on August 18, 1940 when two forces of German aircraft attacked the airfield.

However, despite the heavy alterations inflicted by the Luftwaffe attack, Kenley still remained representative of an RAF fighter station of that period.

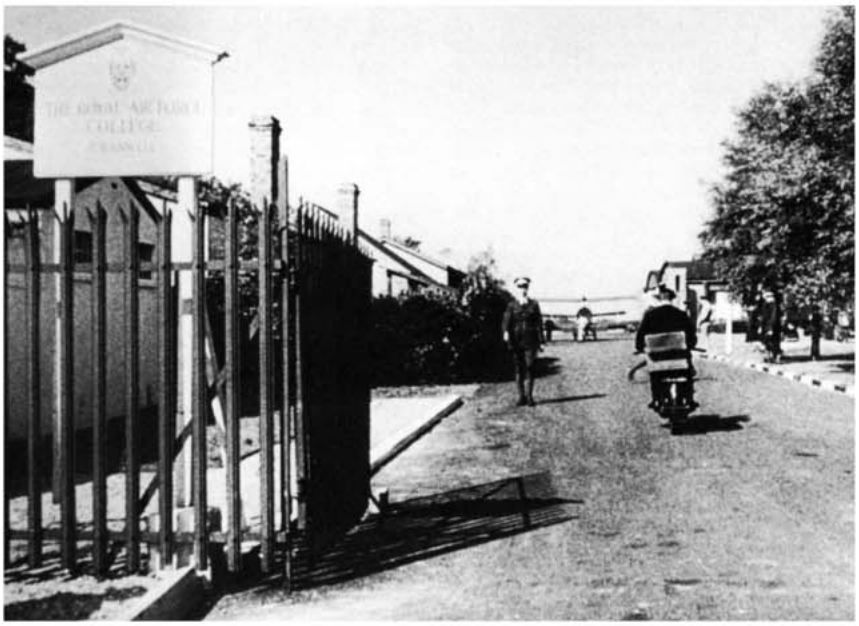
Different parts of the airfield and its buildings were to represent RAF Cranwell in 1928 and '29, and to portray itself during 1930, '31 and '32, the hospital at RAF Uxbridge in '32 and Duxford during the Dunkirk evacuation (referred to in the script) and later in the Battle of Britain. Kenley also had to depict Tangmere in Sussex during March to August 1941 and finally North Weald in Essex during the preparations for the 1945 Victory Flypast over London — the climax of the film. (The script does not make reference to Coltishall or any of the other airfields from which Bader flew other than those mentioned above.)

The art director, Bernard Robinson, and his department, whose job it was to carry out these transformations, was best assisted by the way Kenley was 'carved up' into sections to depict the different settings demanded by the screenplay. For example, the Cranwell flying scenes were filmed on two totally different parts of the airfield to the section that became the runway at North Weald for the flypast scene.

The use of notice boards and sign posts to establish set-ups was employed, one instance being at the old entrance to the aerodrome at the junction of Buxton Lane and Hayes Lane where the buildings here became the entrance to Cranwell. Later in the film More (or his stand-in), now fitted with his 'new' legs, is seen driving through the main entrance at Kenley in Salmons Lane West, his first visit since the crash. Bader's exit from the RAF was also shot here although it remains unstated that he left the Service from Duxford.

A parade scene, over which was captioned 'Kenley — 1930', was shot naturally on the station's parade ground, Kenneth More, Michael Warre, portraying Harry 'Pricky' Day, the 'C' Flight Commander in No. 23 Squadron, and Lyndon Brook, who played the fictitious Johnny Sanderson, plus about twenty extras as airmen, were all dressed in the uniforms of the period complete with breeches and puttees. Douglas Bader, visiting the location, carried out an impromptu inspection. More saluted smartly: 'Hmm not bad', said Bader, 'but to think we used to wear such uniforms. . . . '

Above: **Kenley '1930', circa 1955. On parade is Kenneth More as the recently commissioned, twenty-year-old Flying Officer Bader posted to No. 23 Squadron.** *Below:* **The same place — Kenley parade ground in November 1981 — fifty-one years since the real Douglas Bader was stationed there.**



According to the sign board this is the main gate of the RAF College at Cranwell but it's really Kenley. In fact, under that sign, part of the guardhouse just off Buxton Lane can be seen. Kenneth More is riding his motorcycle towards the area at the rear of the Belfast hangar which, in the picture, is to his right. The bizarre 'Triplane' being pushed by a couple of 'erks' is the Shuttleworth Collection's Avro 504K and beyond it is the Bristol Fighter, the top wing of which is forming a 'third wing' on the Avro.

Above: **No. 242 Squadron 'B' Flight dispersal with pilots on stand-by. The vehicle in foreground is the Hillman utility van. In this photograph the Hurricane Mk IIc 'V5276' has lost its cartoon emblem (see page 44), and the replica SD-T seems to have problems with the top hinge of its rudder. Behind 'V5276' the top of a blast pen wall can be seen.** *Below:* **The centre blast pen of the three on Kenley's east perimeter in November 1981, overgrown and derelict. The tree growing from it, stripped of its leaves, aligns with the cockpit of Hurricane 'V5276' which masked most of the pen wall. Even by 1955, nature was reclaiming her territory.**

Probably the most extensive demand made on the art director was the No. 242 Squadron dispersal area during the Battle of Britain and the 'Duxford' dispersal during the Dunkirk period. The No. 242 area was created by the erection of some wooden huts together with a frame and canvas hangar, coupled with all the appropriate props associated with the 1940 period, on the airfield's eastern perimeter. The huts were placed between two blast pens while the hangar was put up in front of one of these pens to mask off a large white building beyond. Also the hangar provided an obstruction so that only the immediate area being filmed needed to be dressed. The 'Duxford' area was located further along the same boundary towards the Operations Block and the Officers' Mess. Here too, huts were constructed but, in the interests of economy, it is likely that these huts were the same ones. During More's induction parade at Cranwell, shot on the concrete area near the Belfast hangar, remarkably similar ones are seen. The art director probably had them shifted around to suit demands.

The bulk of the Service vehicles seen at Kenley were, for the most part, Bedford QL three-ton trucks, apart from a little Hillman van light utility general runabout, seen when Kenneth More arrives to take command of 242. There were also some Queen Mary trailers and their tractors used when the 'much needed spares and tools for No. 242 Squadron' arrive. It was more than probable that these were the ones that helped to deliver the static Spitfires and Hurricanes. This scene was filmed by the corrugated metal hangar (now condemned) with the brick Belfast one in the background. The only other readily recognisable vehicle seen was a Humber Snipe staff car used by Howard Marion Crawford as he arrived to discuss tactics with Kenneth More.

Right: **The interior of the Belfast hangar at Kenley depicting two Hurricanes being maintained. Foreground is the Mk IIc 'V5276' with a good profile of the Mk I, suitably stripped down and bearing its 501 Squadron codes.**

Kenneth More and Michael Warre with a couple of No. 23 Squadron pilots beside the most authentic peacetime RAF aeroplane which appears in the film — the Bristol Bulldog II. Behind it can be seen the port wing tips of the replica, and beyond that the Shuttleworth Collection's Bristol Fighter. It was in this scene that Warre warned his men off low aerobatics: 'Two pilots have killed themselves already'.

The Aeroplanes

The location and collection of the correct types of aeroplanes in any quantity was a major undertaking and not altogether successful. *Angels One Five*, made at Kenley in 1951 *(see After the Battle No. 30)* had obtained the bulk of its Hurricanes from the Portuguese Air Force and the Luftwaffe was represented by models, library film and a solitary Bf 110 which it is said interrupted its journey to the scrapyard to appear in the film as a crashed victory for John Gregson.

Lewis Gilbert not only had to find a squadron of Hurricanes, he needed Spitfires in quantity for the early war sequences and the preparation for the 1945 Flypast. In addition he had to get the necessary biplanes for the pre-war scenes as well. The Luftwaffe and the combat sequences were another headache altogether. With his budget, big as it was by the standards of British pictures of the time, there was no way that he could afford to look overseas for the aeroplanes he badly needed. He, like the director of *Angels One Five*, would have to turn to the film archives and the model makers with their expertise, and this combination, intercut with studio close-ups of the actors in mainly replica cockpits (the exception was the Spitfire), would be used to produce the battle sequences.

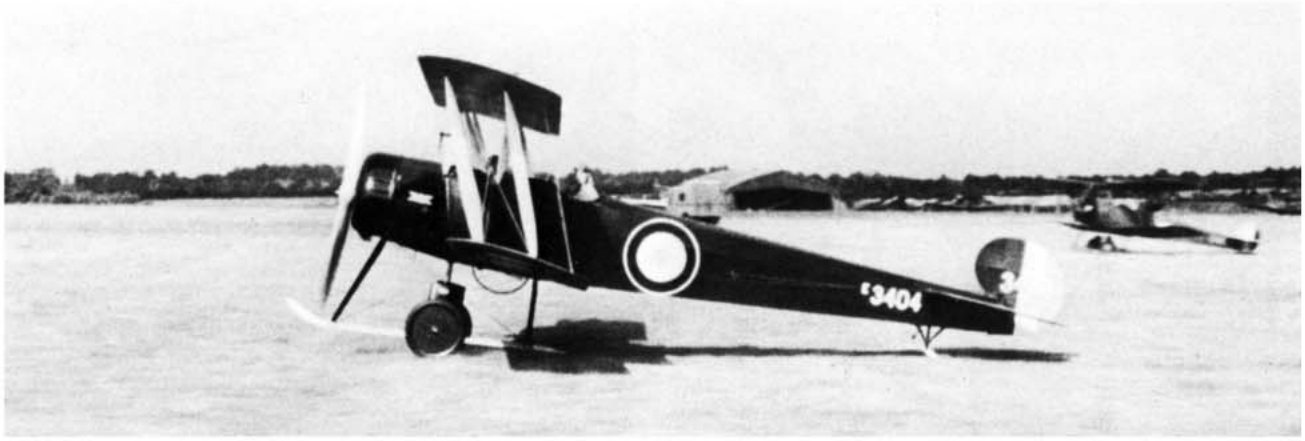
Douglas Bader had been flying a Bristol Bulldog II when he crashed at Woodley aerodrome in Berkshire on December 14, 1931. The Science Museum in London had the sole surviving example of the type in the United Kingdom, and their permission to use it was obtained. However, flying aircraft of the pre-war period were very rare indeed, and this one had only survived due to it not going to the RAF but instead becoming a demonstration model of the type in 1930. Registered as G-ABBB, it flew regularly for the Bristol Aeroplane Company until September 1935 when it was stored at Filton until 1939 when it was donated to the museum. It was not in flying condition, but this Bulldog must have been a most valuable acquisition, and Gilbert commissioned the art department to construct a full scale replica for use as background dressing in the No. 23 Squadron scenes, studio cockpit close-ups and, later, to be broken up to represent the wreckage of Bader's aircraft.

With a tragic irony, the original Bulldog went the same way nine years later. Restored to flying status in the late fifties, and repainted to represent a machine of No. 56 Squadron with the serial K2227, it suffered a minor accident in 1962, and was finally wrecked on September 13, 1964 at the SBAC Air Show at Farnborough when the engine cut out on the top of a loop. Under the care of the Shuttleworth Collection, it was they who removed the wreckage to Old Warden, Bedfordshire. Of the accounts written about this incident it is significant that none of them refer to the pilot concerned, his identity or his presumed injuries — such was the value of this aeroplane. Air Commodore Wheeler called it 'a sad chapter in the Collection's history but, fortunately, the only write-off'. In August 1981, when the author briefly met Wally Berry, the Collection's chief engineer, he was less philosophical. He commented: 'There's about two foot of the rear fuselage, the wings went to Hendon, and there's the engine — or what's left — it bounced a few times.'

The Shuttleworth Collection had been contacted early on in the preparation of the film for their help and guidance and they consented to loan their famous Bristol Fighter F.2b, serial D8096, the Avro 504, serial E3404, and their Hucks Starter.

The Bristol Fighter, 'Brisfit' or 'Biff' as the type was sometimes known, flew to Kenley on August 27 and stayed there until September 30 when all the location work at the aerodrome had been completed. During the period of the film in which the Brisfit appears, the type was on its way out of squadron service in the UK. However, finished in its scheme of silver doped fabric and grey painted cowling, it made fine background dressing and was added to the two Bulldogs to create an illusion of numbers. Its primary function on the production was as the camera plane for the air-to-air and air-to-ground photography. The gunner's compartment became the cameraman's position simply by removing the Lewis gun from the Scarff ring and mounting a 35mm movie camera in its place. During this period, the log book for D8096 refers to the Bristol Aeroplane Company as still maintaining an interest in its existence. Flown at displays ever since, at the time of writing (November 1981) it has been stripped down for a major overhaul.

The Avro 504 was in Manchester, being converted from its 504N configuration to 504K and having a complete restoration, when the production company approached the Collection. The work was being carried out by the apprentices of the A. V. Roe Company and they managed to complete the task in time for the machine to be taken to Kenley by road on August 22. Assembled that day, it was



The Shuttleworth Collection's Avro 504K taking off parallel to the NW-SE runway at Kenley, purportedly flown by Kenneth More from the rear cockpit as Douglas Bader's first flight with artificial legs. Sitting in front was Michael Warre as Harry Day who contracted a mysterious bout of 'cramp' in both hands immediately prior to take-off. Puzzle: What is the identity of the other Avro 504K in the background, which incidentally has its tail fin colours reversed?

then test flown for half-an-hour by Air Commodore Wheeler, one of at least four pilots who flew for the film. As with the Brisfit, the 504 stayed at Kenley until the end of September and carried out a number of flights totalling six hours. Although the Brisfit flew back to Old Warden on September 30, the Avro nipped over to nearby Biggin Hill to appear at a flying display before returning to Kenley to be dismantled and taken to Old Warden by road.

A second 504K is seen briefly in the background during a take-off scene by the Shuttleworth specimen. Maybe this was one of the RAF Museum Avros, E449 or H2311, or perhaps even a mock-up constructed by the Pinewood carpenters. According to Air Commodore Wheeler, E3404 did not go to the studios for the cockpit close-ups as far as he can remember and this is borne out by a scene in the film. Close-ups of Kenneth More and Michael Gough, as Flying Officer Pearson, his instructor, in E3404 shot at Kenley show that the aircraft's leather cockpit combing is black or certainly a very dark colour. The Avro 504 used for 'flying' against back projection in the studio has a more rudimentary cockpit combing of a *light* colour. It is therefore possible that not only was a fairly faithful cockpit section built, but that the remainder of the airframe was constructed but with only sufficient detail necessary for it to appear in the background. Hugh Attwooll, production manager on the film, recalls that the close-ups in studio were done with mock-ups.

Bader's first flight at Cranwell on September 13, 1928 was in an Avro 504, but neither Brickhill's nor Lucas's book records the Mark. If it was a 504K then the Shuttleworth machine was perfect. If Bader had flown in a 504N, sometimes called 'Lynx Avros' after their powerplant, then it is ironic that E3404 had been converted from that Mark and the work accelerated to meet the film's schedule.

The Hucks Starter served as background dressing but at the same time its presence was very necessary. On the lighter-engined aircraft, such as the Avro 504K, it is quite easy to start the engine by spinning the propellor by hand, and this is clearly shown in the first scene of the film. However, as engines got bigger and more powerful, correspondingly the hand starting method became more difficult. Various systems were tried to assist the starting of large aero engines but the final choice settled on the Hucks as it was simple and efficient. Essentially the device is a Model 'T' Ford chassis with a framework mounting on which a shaft is mounted driven by a chain from the vehicle's gearbox. On the end of the shaft is a crosshead which marries with a claw on the centre of an aircraft's propellor boss. The Ford's engine drives the shaft via the gearbox and revolves the propellor. When the aero engine fires, the crosshead and shaft are then ejected clear. As the Brisfit required this method of starting, it was very necessary for the Hucks to be on the location.

The studio mock-up Avro 504K. In the front cockpit is Michael Gough as Flying Officer Pearson, the instructor at Cranwell. Notice the light coloured cockpit combing that differed from the Shuttleworth machine.

The most authentic wartime aeroplane in the film — the Hurricane Mk I, just back from a sortie with battle damage, parked in front of the Belfast hangar (burnt down on October 23, 1978). 'The instruments are smashed and the cockpit's full of glycol.' Notice the dummy bullet holes under the cockpit and on the panel covering the petrol tank. Michael Ripper as Warrant Officer West looks horrified as he's told to have the aircraft ready in half-an-hour. This was one of the few scenes in which Kenneth More was dressed in a one-piece flying suit similar to the Sidcot type favoured by Douglas Bader.

Discussing the merits of 'Big Wing' tactics are, L-R: Howard Marion Crawford as 'Woody' Woodhall, the Duxford Station Commander, Ronald Adam, portraying Air Vice-Marshal Leigh Mallory, and Kenneth More. Behind them is the Hurricane replica.

Posed picture of Kenneth More beside Hurricane 'V5276' showing off the representation of the No. 242 Squadron emblem. Note the brush applied exhaust and oil stains, and the generally sorry state of the airframe.

One aeroplane that was borrowed for the film, but due to circumstances 'failed its audition', was the Avro Tutor two-seater trainer K3215, currently in the Shuttleworth Collection. This type was the successor to the 504 in RAF service. Finished in light blue with its civil registration G-AHSA painted in dark blue it was then based at the now-closed Burnaston aerodrome near Derby. It came to Kenley by road in an unserviceable condition and its owner, Wing Commander Heywood, told Pinnacle Productions that they could put it to any purpose they chose. The art department applied a thin coat of yellow paint to it and gave it R2511 as a serial number. (For the aircraft spotter — R2511 was the second number in a block of forty-one allocated to the DH95 Hertfordshire project. Only the prototype R2510 was built, the rest were cancelled.)

Air Commodore Wheeler and the Shuttleworth engineers on hand were then asked if they could get the Tutor flying and, if so, would Wheeler fly it. The engine was got running, but only in a very rough condition, and Wheeler and the team were worried because they considered that the aircraft would be dangerous if flown and that there was a chance that the engine could shake itself free from its mounting. He bravely consented to do one straight pass over the airfield at a maximum height of fifty feet, which went off without mishap, but, as is often the case in film making, he was politely asked if he would do it again. Reluctantly Wheeler agreed and climbed back into the Tutor. On trying to restart the engine, his reluctance turned to extreme consternation when it caught fire! The motion of the starters turning over sucked the fire into the cylinders and put it out, yet, needless to say, the engine did not start. The starters continued to turn over, when the engine suddenly gave one kick forward, one backward, whereupon the propellor shaft sheared off very neatly and the propellor fell to the ground. The Air Commodore climbed out full of relief and delight that he would not have to risk his neck again after all. Thereafter the Tutor was ignominiously relegated to a corner of the hangar and Wheeler later bought it from Heywood for £25. The aircraft passed to the Collection and apparently the engine still gives problems today, although obviously not as dramatic. In August 1980 it was seen in a hangar at Old Warden minus its power plant.

The provision of wartime aircraft for the film was another problem. Quite what must have passed through Lewis Gilbert's mind when he found out that only one flyable Hurricane was available to him one can only guess. The major aerial combat and ground sequences of the Battle of Britain period depicting Bader commanding No. 242 Squadron required a fair number of them. Michael Ripper, playing Warrant Officer West in one scene in the brick hangar at Kenley, had to report to Kenneth More: 'Eighteen Hurricanes, all new Sir'. In truth there was no chance. The art department were instructed to build a full-size replica (serial R7141 — actually a Spitfire Mk 1) and this was used on location at Kenley and later it went to Pinewood for cockpit close-ups.

The flying Hurricane was the RAF's Mk IIc LF363 (film serial T4125 — not allocated in reality) and it flew to Kenley from its base at Biggin Hill. During the filming there is evidence that it suffered some technical problems. William Hickey, in his column in the Daily Express on September 9, wrote: 'The lone Hurricane that is due to lead the Battle of Britain Flypast next week is unserviceable . . . but I am assured that "it will be all right on the day". The Hurricane had been flying up to a couple of days ago "scrambling" and performing aerobatics for the film . . . *Reach for the Sky*.' So apart from his only flyable Hurricane breaking down, Lewis Gilbert had to give it back to the RAF during his shooting period so that it could participate in the annual flypast. Like Kenley this aeroplane had also been in *Angels One Five*, and LF363 was the most 'star-struck' of the aeroplanes which appear in the film. *Reach for the Sky* was its second screen part and two years later it made a brief appearance in *The One That Got Away*, starring Hardy Kruger as Oberleutnant Franz von Werra. Its fourth and final role was naturally enough in the epic *Battle of Britain* made in 1968. Built in 1944 this aircraft had led a nomadic existence going from unit to unit, at one time kept serviceable by the cannibalisation of another Mk II, Z3682. It was an original member of the Historic Aircraft Flight formed at Biggin Hill on July 11, 1957 which later became the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight. Apart from the various guises applied for film work, it has on occasions suffered ghastly paint schemes in its day-to-day life. The notable one was an attempt at representing Sir Douglas Bader's personal aircraft, and whoever did the lettering deserved shooting. Thankfully it was altered and a more authentic version applied although, for preservation purposes, polyurethane paint with a gloss finish had to be used. Happily today she is still serviceable and now sports a matt colour scheme of dark earth/dark green camouflage and sky type 'S' undersurfaces. The markings are now GN-F of No. 249 Squadron.

The RAF also supplied two static Hurricanes, a Mk I and Mk II. Because false serials were applied to all the aircraft appearing in the film, with the exception of the Shuttleworth Collection machines, identification has not in every case been possible. Therefore, in these two instances, one can only hazard an educated guess. The Mk I (film serial T4107 — a Boulton-Paul Defiant) had metal wings, eight machine gun ports, early kidney-shaped exhausts and a long spinner with a Rotol propellor. I would suggest that this aeroplane was P2617 (another *Angels One Five* star) currently in the Battle of Britain Museum at Hendon. As to the positive identity of the Mk II, I cannot say. There were quite a few still around at the time, and Hawkers (British Aerospace) have assured me that their (at that time) Mk II PZ865 did not appear in the production. This mystery Hurricane (film serial V5276 — allocated to an Airspeed Queen Wasp — later cancelled) had cannon blisters on the upper wings, dummy machine gun ports for filming purposes only, and fishtail exhausts consistent with the Mark. For what it's worth, it also retained the grill attachment on its carburettor intake.

Thus, so far Lewis Gilbert had gathered two flyable biplanes, one to appear and one to act as dressing and camera mount, plus one static biplane coupled with a wooden duplicate. That took care of the pre-war period. The Second World War was not looking too hopeful: he had one flyable Hurricane, two static ones and a replica. For the aviation purist there was worse to follow.

When it came to supplying Spitfires, the RAF was considerably better off numerically than it was with Hurricanes. Unfortunately for Gilbert, the Spitfire's evolution had radically altered its appearance; much more than with the Hurricane. Essentially the Hurricane's profile had remained unchanged, but not so with the Spitfire. All the machines supplied for the film were Mk XVIs. In service from the autumn of 1944, in simple terms the Mk XVI was a late production Mk IX with an American-built Packard Merlin 266 engine in place of a British-built Rolls-Royce Merlin 66. Some versions had the original fuselage profile but from February 1945 the new rear view fuselage with the teardrop canopy was introduced. With cannon armament, broad chord rudder and four-blade propellor, the Mk XVI had come a long way from the Mks I, II and V that were ideally required for historic accuracy in the battle scenes.

Even so, a mere ten years after the end of the war there was a problem finding serviceable machines. This was the hey-day of the scrapman and by 1953 only a few of the 1,054 Mk XVIs built remained in service and about twenty were placed in long term storage, only to be scrapped a few years later when the type

was declared obsolete. Unlike Ben Fisz thirteen years later, whose budget would allow him to hire or renovate Spitfire variants that could be made to reasonably represent the Mk I profile for the film *Battle of Britain*, Gilbert had to live with what the Air Ministry could offer, and of course he had no choice but to accept.

The Civilian Anti-Aircraft Co-operation Unit at Exeter still had four serviceable Spitfires but all with inaccurate profiles in 1940 terms. The previous year this establishment had held the largest stock of the type in the UK until they were replaced by Vampire jets and the others put into storage. These four aircraft: RW352, SL574, TE358 and TE456 were given an overhaul, which included the fitting of standard wing tips in place of the clipped stubs consistent with the Mk XVI, plus the refitting of gun sights and cannon. They were flown to RAF Lyneham in Wiltshire where they joined a collection of nine unserviceable Spitfires. Seven out of this sad collection were in silver finish whilst the other two were camouflaged. One carried the badge of No. 601 Squadron R.Aux.A.F.

Fortunately for this account R. J. Taylor of Kings Lynn, in a letter to Air Pictorial, recorded their serial numbers at the time. they were: RW394, RW345, TB293, TB752, TE341, TE311, TE288 and SL745 — all Mk XVIs. The ninth aeroplane was PK608, a Griffon-engined F.22.

On August 17, the four Spitfires that had flown to Lyneham departed for Kenley, whilst selected others went by road. They were: RW345, SL745, TB293, TE288 and TE341. Another Mk XVI, TB885, not recorded at Lyneham, also arrived at Kenley. Of the serviceable Spitfires, Kenneth More was most apposite when he wrote: 'The RAF managed to rustle up a flight of Spits — but only just.'

Apart from the above listed, two other Spitfires have been credited with appearing in the film. The first was TB863 (restored at Duxford in 1978), and the second is RR263, one-time Kenley gate-guardian, but now at Tours Air Base in France. It was given to the French Air Force in 1967 and painted as TB597 of No. 340 (Ile de France) Squadron. Both of these aircraft have the original fuselage profile contrary to those seen in the film.

Of the Spitfires that flew in the production, two are known to have survived. SL574 became a member of the Historic Aircraft Flight and it was this aircraft that force-landed on September 20, 1959 at the Oxo Cricket ground at Downham, near Bromley, in Kent. It was this incident that ended the inclusion of 'veterans' in the subsequent Battle of Britain Day flypasts. Repaired, it went to Bentley Priory as a static exhibit, where it still stands today. The other, TE456, was donated to the Domain War Memorial Museum, Auckland, New Zealand, in 1957 at the request of Air Chief-Marshal Sir Keith Park. (One of the static Spitfires has also been traced to New Zealand, for TE288 was donated in 1963 to honour all Kiwis of the South Island who flew the type.)

So Lewis Gilbert managed to assemble his modest air force at Kenley that, in film terms, was to span nearly twenty years and six locations.

Having surveyed and described the aeroplanes, this is probably an appropriate juncture to take a look at the flying kit issued by the costume department to the actors for the wartime aviation scenes. Getting straight to the point, the equipment was not authentic 1940 and 1941 issue but, having said that, the statement should be put into some perspective.

As with all military equipment, flying clothing and associated items were modified as needs required and changed in appearance and detail. Being manufactured on a huge scale that steadily increased through the war, when it ended in 1945 demand instantly

May 1940 — 1955 style. Two Spitfire Mk XVIs taxi into dispersal after a sortie. Foreground is 'VT151' in reality the unserviceable TE341 dressed as S-QV of No. 19 Squadron. The rear view fuselage is pretty well illustrated here, the most jarring feature of the Spitfires in the film.

plummeted. Consequently massive stocks of equipment surplus to requirements, some of it unissued, came on to the open market. Much of this kit was of the late-pattern, the earlier styles being more difficult to obtain because of natural wastage or disposal during the course of the war as improved equipment became available. It was some of this surplus that was acquired by costumiers and film companies alike and stored for future use to be employed whenever an RAF film was in production. *Reach for the Sky* was not unique in its use of late-war/post-war equipment. Both *633 Squadron* and *The Dambusters* and others, were guilty in this area to varying degrees, if the word guilty can be justly applied. When all is said and done, if the correct gear is not available then the only alternative is to make it, and this is where the accountant has his say. His dictum spans the entire spectrum of film making and it all comes down to profit and loss in the end. In the austere fifties the British Film Industry, with its small budgets by American or modern epic standards, had to produce films that entertained *and* made money — there were certainly no funds available to be set aside specially to produce facsimiles of the correct vintage oxygen masks or goggles!

A twist of irony with the flying kit in *Reach for the Sky*, was that it perfectly complemented the Mk XVI Spitfires provided: in fact the period of a post-war Auxiliary Air Force unit (markings excepted) was unintentionally portrayed. Nevertheless, as far as the great majority of the public were concerned, what they saw on the screen was their conception of Battle of Britain fighter pilots, complete with leather fur-lined jackets, Mae-Wests, boots, helmets and goggles.

This picture was used for publicity quite extensively as it typified the 'hero' image and was not included in the film; in fact the lighting contrasts give it the 'feel' of a studio stills publicity session. In the Exhibitors' Campaign Book (produced to help cinema managers publicise the film on its release), a line drawing based upon this photograph was offered as the subject of a children's colouring block. For the record, Kenneth More's flying kit breaks down as follows: Helmet — Type 'C' issued from 1945; goggles — Mk VIII from 1943; oxygen mask — Type 'H' first introduced in late 1945/early 1946 although the hose and attachments put it as 'fifties vintage. His flying jacket is the Irvin type, circa 1942, and the life jacket is the yellow Mae-West Type Mk 2, dating from approximately the same year.

Camouflage and Markings

The general subject of paint schemes and markings where aircraft, tanks, ships or any military items are concerned usually divides hitherto closely-bonded people into sneering, opinionated, dogmatists, hell-bent on proving that they are an expert in their particular field and determined to prove, despite contrary evidence, that such and such an aeroplane/tank/ship/lorry or whatever never, but never, carried a certain finish or markings on operations. If the reader falls into this category, then either skip this section or learn to accept that the film industry is a law unto itself.

Going through the film in chronological order, we come first to the aeroplanes loaned by the Shuttleworth Trust. Both the Bristol Fighter and the Avro 504K retained their own liveries and were not touched by the art department.

The two Bulldogs were finished in silver and both bore a stripe of alternating coloured squares on the top wings' upper surfaces and the fuselage sides. It can only be assumed that the colours were red and blue. The squadron emblem, an eagle preying on a falcon, was depicted on the tail fin of both aircraft. No. 23 Squadron Bulldogs had the upper fuselage decking finished in dark green but this feature was not included in the film.

The Science Museum's machine was given the serial K2496 (actually an Avro Tutor), although Bader was flying K1676 on the day of the crash. The replica Bulldog carried K2494 (an actual Bulldog number) until it 'flew' in the studio and 'crashed' at Denham when it became K2496 for continuity.

The Spitfires, because of their rear view fuselages and tear-drop canopies, looked more than a little strange in their inaccurate representations of early summer 1940 livery. Like the Hurricanes they were all allocated fictitious serials and, in one case, a serial was duplicated on two machines. They were served better than the Hurricanes by the art department where squadron codes were concerned, however, because both No. 19 Squadron and, fleetingly, No. 222 Squadron, were represented during the Dunkirk scenes when 'Johnny Sanderson', 'the C.O. of 19 Squadron' is reported missing.

One Spitfire (film serial VT151) is seen wearing QV-S (No. 19 Squadron) on its starboard side and shortly after, seen from the port, it carries ZD-S (No. 222 Squadron), so maybe the ruse of carrying different sets of codes at the same time was employed.

Another Spitfire TE456, dressed as TE425 (why did they bother?), one of the four that flew to Kenley, is seen taxi-ing and wearing PD-S on the portside, a code that has no bearing on an actual fighter unit at that time and in that operating area.

A record of the Spitfires' film markings came into my possession from Mike Hooks, via Mike Stroud, both of British Aerospace, and I am indebted to both of them, for their help.

Because the film is in black and white, obviously one cannot comment on the colours used to paint the wartime aircraft. However, my only opinion, ignoring the inaccuracy of the patterns, is that the Spitfires and the two Mk IIc Hurricanes looked a little on the light side. The Mk 1 and the replica Hurricanes looked a bit better in their slightly darker tones. On the whole the camouflage and the markings on the Spitfires were pretty bad, but how can one be dogmatic about paint schemes when the aircraft being painted are totally wrong for the period depicted. The most meticulously applied 1940 livery will not disguise a Mk XVI with a rear view fuselage, and remember the only serviceable Merlin-engined types in any quantity, available from the RAF at that time, were of that Mark. The only serviceable alternatives were three Griffon-engined P.R.19s of a Meteorological Flight. As far as flyable Spitfires were concerned Lewis Gilbert was caught between the devil and the P.R. blue sea!

For their appearance in the 1945 North Weald scene, the Spitfires all had their code letters removed, but retained the same roundels and fin flashes from the 'Dunkirk' period, with red and blue Type 'B' on the wing upper surfaces and post-war (May 1947 onward) red, white and blue Type 'D' on the lower surfaces. The fuselage sides also had Type 'D', but with a narrow yellow outline, while the fin had the 27-inch (or 24-inch) red, white and blue flash. The modified markings of the late-war period, including the new upper wing Type 'C', introduced in March 1945 were not incorporated.

Although photographs taken of Douglas Bader's formation at North Weald on that September day do not include Spitfires with the modified fuselage, at least the four-blade propellors, cannon and broad chord rudders of the Mk XVIs at Kenley were consistent with that period.

Actual Serial	Film Serial		Squadron Codes	Squadron No.
RW352	RA617	(Lancaster)	QV-S	19
SL574	RV214	(Halifax)	QV-R	19
TE358	*AR251	(Spitfire)	QV-X	19
TE456	TE425	(not allocated)	PD-S	?
RW345	TA614	(Mosquito)	-	-
SL745	TR627	(non-existent)	QV-T	19
TB293	RV415	(cancelled Spitfire)	QV-U	19
TE288	*AR251	(Spitfire)	QV-X/ZD-S	19/222
TE341	VT151	(not allocated)	ZD-S/QV-S	222/19
TB885	R1247	(Wellington)	QV-V	19

*Duplicated serial

No. 242 Squadron – what happened?

Sporting black spinners and stencilled serial numbers, the four Hurricanes carried the standard A.1 roundel of the period on their fuselage sides and the 27-inch fin flash on the tail. Some of the time the replica did not carry a fin flash, and the wing upper surfaces of at least two machines bore incorrect Type 'A' red, white and blue roundels. Undersurfaces were not readily visible on all of the Hurricanes, but the attempt at a Type 'A' roundel on the Mk IIC 'V5276' did not look very convincing as the dimensions looked somewhat suspect, in fact, more like a Type 'D'.

For some unknown reason a huge clanger was dropped with the No. 242 Squadron code letters. The four aircraft were all painted with the letters SD forward of the fuselage roundel instead of the letters LE. As a result the Hurricanes were dressed as No. 501 Squadron machines and not No. 242.

Due to the small number of Hurricanes available, individual code letters were changed several times, and used in conjunction with different camera shots and angles, created an impression of greater numbers, particularly in the 'scramble' sequence. The fictitious serials did not alter

'242 Squadron, scramble!' The only such sequence in the film. Parked beside the canvas hangar is the replica, whilst SD-Y is the mystery 'V5276'. The pilot nearest the camera in shirtsleeves is Basil Appleby as Crowley-Milling. Although No. 242 was composed mainly of Canadians, Crowley-Milling is British and was portrayed as such in the film. On the extreme right with flying jacket, Mae-West and cigarette is American Lee Patterson as the Canadian pilot Stan Turner. Note what look like Type 'A' roundels on the aircraft's wings.

on each of the four aircraft and their code letter changes as seen are as follows:

Actual Serial	Film Serial	Squadron Codes
LF363	T4125	SD-K
		SD-N
		SD-R
		SD-X
		SD-W
possibly P2617	T4107	SD-P
		SD-W
		SD-X
?	V5276	SD-Y
		SD-W
Replica	R7141	SD-T
		SD-F

Because T4125 was really LF363 it will be obvious why it assumed the most guises.

One aircraft carried an adhesive Squadron Leader's pennant under the cockpit on the port side during the 'scramble', and 'V5276' in one photograph wore an oversize No. 242 Squadron emblem — a cartoon of a large flying-boot kicking a small Adolf Hitler up the backside — on the port side engine panel.

242 go into action

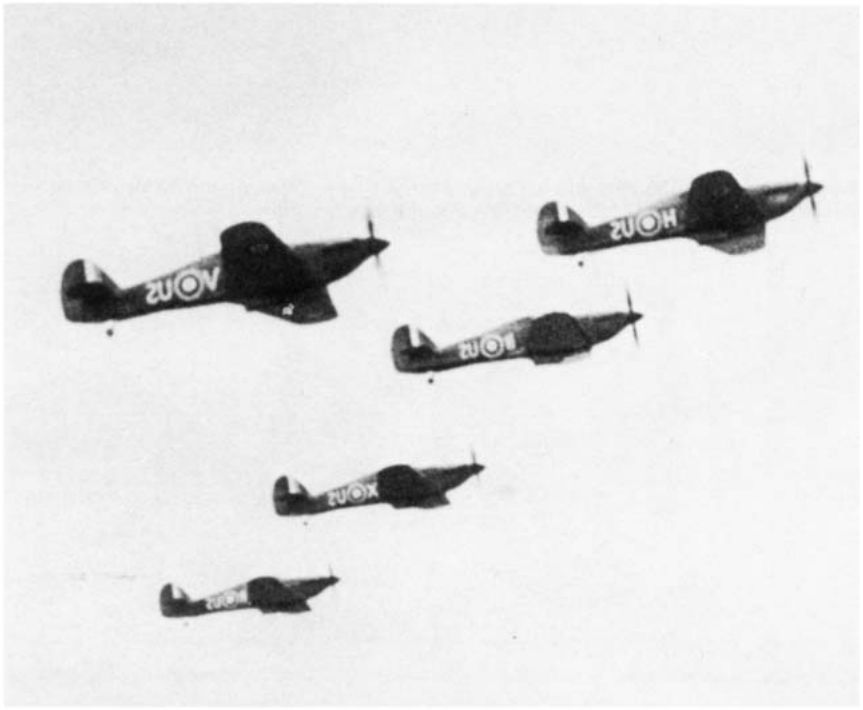
The film depicts only one actual 'scramble' by Bader's squadron, and this represents the call on August 30 (but not stated) when it was directed to intercept an enemy raid, estimated at seventy-plus aircraft, approaching North Weald which was No. 242's first contribution to the battle.

Because Lewis Gilbert only had access to a single airworthy Hurricane, it is worth looking at the 'scramble' in some detail to gauge the ingenuity applied in creating the impression of large numbers.

From the moment that Kenneth More puts down the telephone receiver at dispersal and shouts: '242 Squadron, scramble!' to the first 'airborne' cockpit close up of him, the sequence's duration totals one minute and twelve seconds. In that period there are thirty-two separate shots, which on average means a film edit every two and a quarter seconds! Of the thirty-two shots, fifteen consist of a mixture of pilots running to their aircraft, climbing in, or giving thumbs-up signals from the cockpit to the ground crews. Within all this there is much feverish activity from airmen running about all over the place to aid the mood of urgency. Hurricane LF363 is seen starting its engine from five different angles, while there are seven shots of it either standing with its engine revving or beginning to taxi.

A typical taxi-ing shot was composed in the following manner. In the background the Mk I would pose as an unserviceable aircraft with a side engine panel removed. Mid-ground would be LF363 on the move, and in foreground would be seen the rear fuselage and tail fin of the replica as it was towed out of shot. Another set-up was filmed from under LF363 close to the undercarriage with the replica in the background. An 'erk' unplugged the battery trolley in the foreground as the replica began to be towed away out of shot, followed by LF363 under its own power. A third instance showed LF363 taxi-ing presenting its port profile with the tail fin of the replica disappearing out of shot to the left of camera.

Hurricanes in actual quantity were presented by library film, as a wide shot showing five with light coloured spinners roaring across an airfield, kicking up dust, to pass over the heads of the film crew. Intercut with this was Lee Patterson in the replica in studio sliding the canopy shut, and likewise with Basil Appleby, as Crowley-Milling, doing the same. A shot of a single Hurricane raising its undercarriage from the same library footage was included, and the squadron assembled in flight climbing to intercept was a clip from *Angels One Five* with six Hurricanes in 'V' formation. Unfortunately it was necessary to reverse this clip so that the aeroplanes flew in the correct direction 'towards' the Luftwaffe, 'approaching North Weald', but as a result the code letters were back to front.



No. 242 Squadron climb to intercept the raid over North Weald. Hang on a tick! Look at those codes. This was the reversed clip out of 'Angels One Five' that Lewis Gilbert had to use in his desperate search for Hurricanes in quantity. It was unfortunate that in 'Angels One Five' the RAF flew from the right of the screen while the Luftwaffe flew from the left; in 'Reach for the Sky' the opposite applied, hence the reversal of the clip. A second aspect of this photograph is that Hurricane LF363 is in that formation somewhere.

Other Locations

'COME ON BADER, GIVE US A SHOW'

Apart from Kenley, another aerodrome was required, a small civilian one which could double for Woodley for the crash sequence.

Denham aerodrome was selected, probably because of its closeness to Pinewood Studios. The existing buildings were used, the only modification being the fitting of a signboard saying 'Reading Aero Club' to the roof of the control hut. To help create the period, contemporary motor cars were parked in the background and, to give a flying club 'feel', a civil aeroplane was placed beside Control. This biplane stills exists and is maintained in flying condition. It is the sole surviving Spartan Arrow, G-ABWP, a two-seat sporting aeroplane not dissimilar to the De Havilland Moth family.

The two Bulldogs were moved to the field and the Bristol Fighter flew there from Old Warden to join them on October 12.

The script involved three civilian pilots asking Bader to give them a show in his Bulldog, which initially he declined to do. It was during this sequence that the verbal references to his sporting prowess and the Hendon aerobatic display were made. Finally goaded by the remark: 'These RAF boys only perform when there's a crowd', More climbs into his aircraft, takes off and does a low beat-up of the airfield. Coming out of a slow roll, he loses height and a wing tip touches the ground causing the Bulldog to crash.

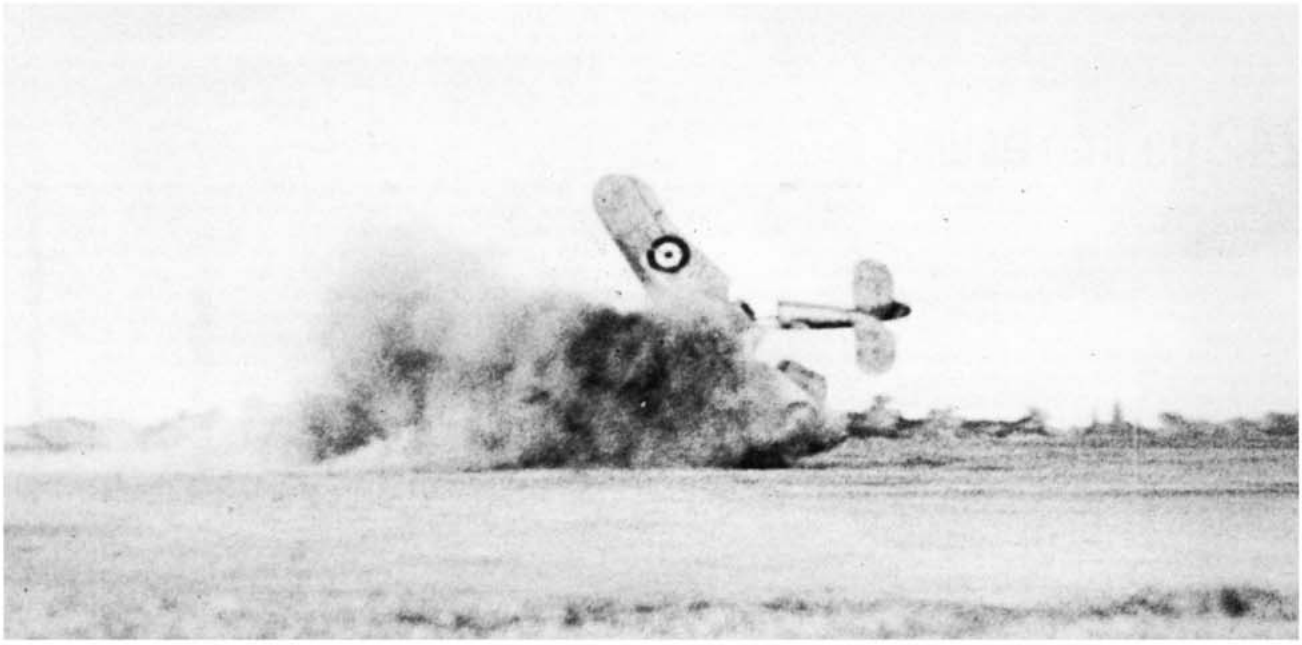
Because the Science Museum's Bulldog was not serviceable, there was no alternative but to resort to 'trickery' to produce the flying sequence. The take-off, aerobatics and the crash were all done with a model — a surprisingly good one at that. Compared with the model work produced for the battle scenes later in the film, it was most convincing, particularly the crash itself.

The Bristol Fighter did some low passes over the airfield to photograph the actors, buildings and remaining aircraft on the ground, and this footage was intercut with the model to give Bader's point of view. Also cut in were close up shots of Kenneth More in the studio 'flying' the Bulldog replica against back projection, plus close-ups of Lyndon Brook and the other actors looking skyward. Immediately prior to the model crashing, a close-up is seen of the replica's wing tip ripping up the turf. Finally there are quick shots of the actor's faces showing their horror and disbelief.

The Bulldog replica, having assumed the identity of K2496 for the studio shots, met its ignominious but inevitable demise by being broken up to become the wreckage on the aerodrome. This looked extremely effective, with More, his face trickling with blood, sitting in the shattered cockpit, completely shocked, uncomprehending what had happened. The mock-up engine, severed from the airframe and giving off wisps of smoke, together with its smashed propellor, coupled with the distorted and broken wings, all added to the illusion initially presented by the model.

A wide shot shows the wreckage smoking on the airfield with everybody running hell for leather towards it. Brook and the others lift the barely conscious More from the cockpit and lay him down on the grass. The film is careful not to show his legs or any blood on his flying suit. It is interesting to muse on how this scene would be approached today, considering the propensity for 'total realism' in some cinematic quarters.

Left: **'These RAF boys only perform when there's a crowd.' Kenneth More angered by the remark strides towards his aircraft at Denham aerodrome. Behind him is the Spartan Arrow G-ABWP. The building on the right is Denham's actual control hut which was replaced by a modern, larger complex in 1962. The house on the left is now the Hawksridge Club.** *Right:* **'Flying' the Bulldog replica in the studio against back projection. There appears to be a rip in the fabric in the wing, extreme right.**



The model Bulldog ploughs into the ground turning over, breaking the fuselage in two — possibly the best staged model crash in a film at that time.

Still dazed and in shock More's line is: 'This is damn silly, let me get up', only to be gently restrained by Brook. Then, in the penultimate shot, More turns to Brook and says with a quiet urgency: 'John, I can't feel my legs'. The whole Woodley sequence ends on a shot of Bader's shoes lying beside the wreckage, the incidental music swelling up to complete the mood of tragedy. The reader might be forgiven for thinking that the shoes were shown purely to heighten the drama and to underline the extent of the injuries to his legs. This was no doubt the intention, but at the same time it was no creative ploy, for Brickhill's book includes an original photograph of the wreckage and Bader's shoes are clearly in view, neatly placed together.

This scene was one that came under heavy criticism from Douglas Bader himself with regard to the changes of characters. In reality he had been lifted from the cockpit by an Australian called Jack Cruttenden, who was a pupil pilot at the aerodrome. Cruttenden had travelled to hospital with Bader in the ambulance and held the femoral artery in his right leg to staunch the flow of blood. It was this kind of alteration and omission, no matter how necessary in film terms, that irked him. Like Geoffrey Stephenson and Squadron Leader Woollett, Cruttenden was merged into the fictitious 'Johnny Sanderson'.

The wreckage of the Bulldog replica at Denham aerodrome with Kenneth More still in the cockpit. It can be seen that the mock-up engine was quite detailed considering that it was not shown in close-up in the film as in this picture.

The hospital ward at RAF Uxbridge with Kenneth More on crutches. 'I'm, bored with this. How about a spin in your Bentley Peely?' Jack Watling (right) as John Peel, complete with broken leg, agrees, whilst Nigel Green as Vic Streatfeild, with a definitely broken arm, points out that the three of them together wouldn't make one good driver.

'Three teas please.' 'Cream or plain?' The film version of Douglas Bader's first encounter with Thelma Edwards (Muriel Pavlow), later to become his wife. Jack Watling looks on, equally impressed with Miss Pavlow. Behind them is part of the studio set of The Pantiles, a big design that included sections of the interior and the garden.

'THREE TEAS PLEASE'

The events that led up to Douglas Bader's first meeting with Thelma Edwards at the Pantiles restaurant were pretty accurately re-created. It was during the early summer of 1932 and he was based at the RAF Hospital at Uxbridge, and had yet to get his artificial legs. He was using crutches and a peg leg (pylon) on his left stump.

Two actual characters, fellow patients, John Peel with his left leg in plaster, and Vic Streatfeild with a broken arm, were included in the script. Peel was played by Jack Watling and Streatfeild by Nigel Green.

In the film Watling and Green are playing cards in the hospital ward to pass the time. The ward was a studio set but an establishing shot of airmen being drilled by an NCO was shot at Kenley — the station's church can clearly be seen in the background. Kenneth More confesses to being bored and refers to Watling's Bentley (Peel really owned a Humber) and suggests going for a 'spin'. The trio, with Watling at the wheel, are seen roaring out of the hospital gates and down various country roads. On seeing that the car has a hand throttle on the steering wheel, More cajols Watling into letting him have a go at driving. Using his peg leg on the clutch, with much grinding of gears and shouts of 'Contact' and 'Chocks away', the Bentley shoots off wildly through the countryside nearly colliding with a large lorry at a junction. 'What's your name mate, Death?' enquires the driver. Further on, clearly getting bored with More's driving, Watling and Green on seeing the Pantiles insist they stop for tea and, despite More's protests that he's enjoying himself, he turns the Bentley into the forecourt of the restaurant.

The scenes of the car ride and the fictitious near-miss with the lorry were all filmed on roads in the Pinewood area. With the exception of the lorry driver's remark, all the exteriors were photographed in long shot or from angles making it impossible to identify the occupants of the Bentley. Close-ups of More, Watling and Green in the car were filmed in the studio against back projection. The use of long shots suggests that these were done by the production company's second unit employing stand-ins whilst the actors were engaged on the film elsewhere.

The actual Pantiles, still standing today on the A30 at Bagshot, was used and the Bentley is seen pulling in and parking outside. After that shot, all the restaurant scenes, both interior and exterior, were shot on a set at Pinewood.

The so English Pantiles restaurant near Bagshot with the three 'cripples' arriving in Peel's Bentley. Slightly overcast, the weather is not deterring the demure ladies from enjoying their cream tea, although there were a few strange looks when the occupants of the car emerged with the driver displaying an apparent lack of legs.

The Pantiles on a wet rotten October day in 1981. All the tables with their bright coloured sun umbrellas have gone, together with the prim ladies and the three 'cripples'. Peel's Bentley has been replaced by a distinctly less glamorous Hillman Imp. No longer a tea place for genteel folk, it is now a night spot and disco!

Brickhill describes the drive in his book and it was probably less frantic than the film portrays. Bader was driving reasonably well until he got caught up in heavy traffic in Slough and was obviously having problems with the stop-start of the congestion. Streatfeild in the back traded insults with any irate fellow road users. They came upon the Cricketers pub on the A30 but, because it was on the right-hand side and there was a constant stream of cars approaching, Bader found it too awkward to ease up and turn, so he carried on. A hundred yards further on they reached the Pantiles on the left.

Above left: **'Bienvenue a Twickenham, Monsieur.' Kenneth More meets his French contact in the 'Rue de la Pepiniere, St. Omer.'** *Above right:* **That same corner in September 1981 and 'St. Omer' is now a car park. Douglas Bader is represented by my wife Hilary who is only 'legless' after a surfeit of white wine!**

Below left: **Hiding from the German patrol in the bicycle shop doorway. Strategically placed lights at the bottom of Church Lane obscure the river area.** *Below right:* **Church Lane where the 'Germans' marched as pictured in September, 1981. Of the real cobbles seen only a small section remains down by the tree.**

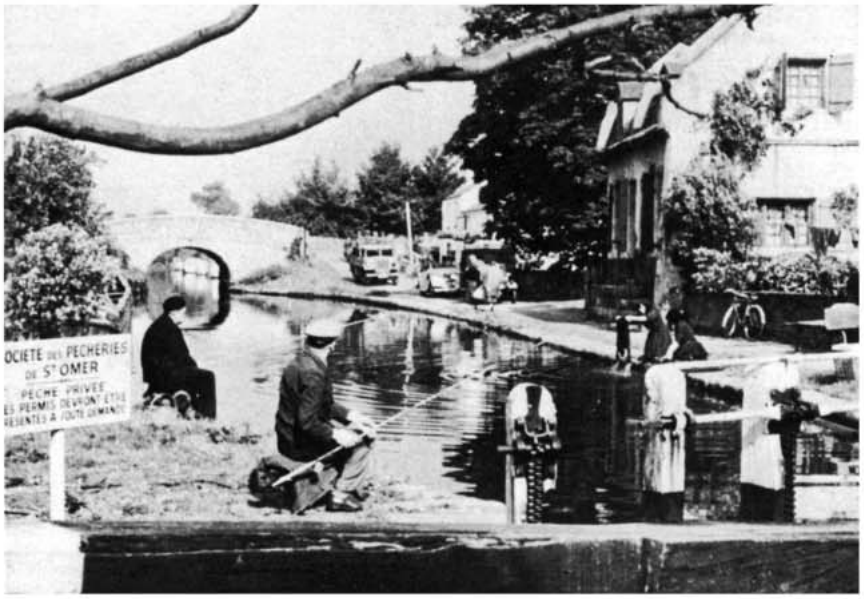
ESCAPE AND RECAPTURE

Bader's escape from the hospital at St. Omer was shown in some detail and care was taken to get the right 'feel' with the French locations. Taking the film unit to St. Omer in northern France was out of the question, but Danny Angel flew there, accompanied incidentally by Thelma Bader, to see the hospital and the house by the canal where Douglas Bader had been hidden by the brave Monsieur and Madame Hiecque.

Following his capture after landing by parachute, the film cut to a studio set of the ward in the hospital. In bed and dressed in a night-shirt, Kenneth More is brought a meal of soup and bread on a tray by a French girl working there. Hidden under the bread is a note: 'A man will be waiting outside every night from midnight until 2 a.m. He will be smoking a cigarette'. To destroy the evidence he stuffs the piece of paper into his pipe and smokes it, just as the German doctor enters to ask him how he is feeling. This is where events are compressed or only verbally referred to as More thanks the doctor for the return of his legs, the script omitting to mention the Luftwaffe repairing and returning his original leg from the wreck of his Spitfire.

With the clock striking midnight More gingerly gets out of bed and removes his night-shirt under which he is wearing his uniform. Having already prepared a rope made from knotted sheets, he secures it and lowers it out of a window. As quietly as possible he climbs out, worried that the whimperings of a wounded airman in a nearby bed will bring the sentry in to investigate.

He climbs down the rope, which fortunately for him reaches the ground, looks about and walks towards some buildings opposite. In the darkness a match flame ignites in a doorway and More sees his contact. Kenneth More and the Frenchman begin to walk away from the hospital. It is here for dramatic effect that they have to hide in a doorway from a passing German patrol. In reality Bader got a terrible fit of the giggles as he and his French aid walked through darkened streets until his right leg began to cause problems. The cobbled roads with their uneven surface became very difficult for More to negotiate and his right 'stump' gets chafed raw by the walk. (It took Bader about forty-five minutes to get from the hospital to the house). He asks to rest briefly; the Frenchman says that it is only the next house, and More is carried the last few yards on his friend's back.



The German convoy arriving at Cowley to search for Kenneth More, led by a Kubelwagen (partly obscured by civilians). In the foreground is the lock, and the notice board states that it is a private fishing area by permit only. In reality this is still the case, but legislated by the London Angling Association — not the Societe des Pecheries de St. Omer!

As stated above, the hospital ward was a studio set but the exterior shot of the rope of knotted sheets dropping from the window was filmed at the barracks in Albany Street, NW1, near Regents Park in London. At this location Kenneth More is seen scaling down the lower part of the 'rope' and touching the ground, he then walks out of frame to the left of the screen.

The following shot shows him walking across a cobbled street and seeing the Frenchman light a cigarette in the doorway of a building. This was filmed at the junction of Church Street and Church Lane near the River Thames in Twickenham, Middlesex. In one edit, More had travelled nearly ten miles as the crow flies! The building, dressed with German military road signs, was really a second-hand goods shop.

As More and the Frenchman begin their walk down Church Lane (actually towards the river) to get to the Hiecque's house, they suddenly hear the approach of the German patrol. Both nip into the nearest doorway for cover, which happens to be the entrance of a shop 'pour les bicyclettes', while the patrol marches past. In reality this was a bicycle shop owned then by a Mr. Russell, which went 'continental' along with the rest of the immediate neighbourhood for three days and nights, while Lewis Gilbert filmed all the material he needed to depict the agonising walk undertaken by Bader. Hitherto, small cottages, so English, suddenly carried the cross of Lorraine.

Apart from Church Lane, the unit filmed in other parts of the area nearby but the locations are not apparent because of considerable re-development in that section of the town. This part of Twickenham was old and quaint, easily lending itelf to the transformation. Production Manager Hugh Attwooll knew the area from years before the war, and it was probably he who recommended its possibilities for the film. Even allowing for the re-development the area still retains its charm, and locals who lost their sleep during the filming affectionately remember 'Kenny More and all them Germans' and one recalled the unit laying rubber cobbles in the street.

However, the arrival in the early hours of the morning at the Hiecque's house was filmed, not in Twickenham, but at Cowley near Uxbridge, not far from the studios at Pinewood. Through the 'magic' of editing, Kenneth More and his companion were thus transported about fifteen miles.

Again, a still taken for publicity purposes, on the canal bank at Cowley, it illustrates the German soldier (left) referred to in the text. The soldier on the right is wearing an M.1916 steel helmet which could have been worn by the type of units — mainly manned by territorials — who guarded POWs, but his tunic collar has incorrect piping. 'Feldwebel' Diffring's belt has a Luftwaffe buckle. On the extreme right scaffolding can just be seen, and this was probably supporting the facade of the two houses. One witness recalled that the structure was three-sided.

Again, this was an area that could be converted into 'France', although more effort was involved than had been required at Twickenham. A section of the bank of the Grand Union Canal was selected, over which was a brick, hump-back bridge that carried the B470 road to Iver. By the bridge a wide sand and gravel footpath led down to the bank along to a lock and the keeper's cottage. A site between a large tree and the garden at the side of 'Toll' cottage was chosen and here the art department built a facade of two houses, one belonging to Monsieur and Madame Hiecque. A portion of their property, interior and exterior, together with yard and outbuildings was also constructed in the studio. It should be noted that the reason for the multiplicity of locations within this section of the film was to render the atmosphere and geography as accurate as possible within the restriction of not being able to actually go to St. Omer to shoot this sequence.

Before leaving this section of the film, it is worth taking a look at that most emotive of subjects — German military uniforms and rank insignia as shown in war pictures. Although the great majority of a film's audience doesn't know its Gefreiter from its Oberst, to get uniforms and associated details wrong is probably the least forgiveable sin as they are the easiest to portray accurately. It is not an insurmountable task when compared with, for example the finding of a ship to portray the Admiral Graf Spee in *The Battle of the River Plate*. When we saw that film we accepted the American cruiser playing the part without quibbling. However, what was unforgiveable were the anti-aircraft gunners on board wearing American uniforms and helmets whilst Peter Finch in the foreground was regaled in German naval uniform.

Unfortunately for every maker of war films, the standard of German uniforms was set at its most highest in *It Happened Here (see after the Battle No. 12)*, by Kevin Brownlow and Andrew Mollo, a fictitious account of Britain under German domination, completed in 1964. Unfortunately for experts on German militaria (and Brownlow and Mollo, although for different reasons) it did not secure wide distribution. Brownlow's book *How it Happened Here* includes two pictures to underline the difference between authentic uniforms (in his film) and costumiers' re-creations. The photograph selected to depict the costumier's efforts was of Michael Rennie in a scene from *The Battle of the V.1*.

Reach for the Sky does not fall into the 'bottom of the class' where this subject is concerned, by any means, as there have been other British films that have been much worse. But, taking one of Diffring's soldiers as an example, Andrew Mollo comments that, although dressed an army (as opposed to SS) soldier, 'he wears a World War One steel helmet with an SS emblem. Rank badges and insignia are correct but (his) tunic has incorrect pointed cuffs. Equipment (is a) typical film mock-up with obviously no ammunition in pouches. Bayonet incorrect.'

The site of the 'maison d'Hiecques' is today a domestic garage, and the white building by the Chevrolet truck is The Shovel pub. The art director's mock-up houses blend well with the locale. *Above:* The 'St. Omer' misnomer pictured in November 1981 photographed from the lock.

Pinewood

With the bulk of the exterior material in the can, the unit departed from Kenley at the end of September and the aeroplanes that could flew away, whilst the others were dismantled and taken away by lorry; for some to fates unknown.

Filming at the studio started in early October, and one of the early sequences shot must have been of Kenneth More 'flying' the replica Bulldog, for it was around the 12th of that month that it went to Denham on its last journey.

As previously mentioned, shooting took about seven or eight weeks and it was during this period that some of the most memorable sequences were filmed.

The agonies of Bader struggling to get around on crutches and a peg leg were graphically interpreted and it was at this time that Kenneth More was seen in a wheelchair which obviously had a box underneath in which he placed his own legs with the 'stumps' on top. But getting around on crutches and displaying the unevenness of the amputations called for ingenuity. There was no way that he could do the usual 'Long John Silver' routine and tuck his legs up behind him. The solution appeared in the form of an hospital almoner who had lost his legs during the war whilst serving with a tank unit in Normandy. His amputations were virtually the same as Bader's and fortuitously he was of similar build and colouring to Kenneth More. Dressed identically to More, and always photographed from the back, it was this anonymous man who hobbled across the hospital garden, the ward at 'RAF Uxbridge' or the tea garden of the studio set of 'The Pantiles'. Intercut very cleverly were shots of More from the waist up using crutches. The final touch was the dubbing on of More's voice during shots of the almoner. A good example of this was at 'RAF Uxbridge'. As Jack Watling and Nigel Green are playing cards, the almoner on crutches comes into shot and Watling invites him to join them. Over the almoner's shoulder, More's voice is heard: 'What with you sharks, not likely'. As he reaches the window, the film cuts to More on crutches and the illusion is complete.

It was during the hospital scenes that Dorothy Alison portrayed the real-life Nurse Dorothy Brace so movingly, one minute bolstering the flagging morale of her charge when he finds out that his girl friend has gone to South Africa, or the next, tearing him off a strip when he begins to wallow in self-pity, calling himself a helpless cripple: 'Did you hear about Johnson? Crashed the other day, killed outright — lucky blighter', he moans. Her performance was later singled out by many critics as the best supporting part.

For the scenes at Roehampton, More was in a dressing-gown that came just below his knees. The lower parts of his legs were covered in what appeared to be shiny metal to simulate the artificial legs. As Robert Desoutter, Sydney Tafler's dialogue explained the secrets of learning to use the legs in some detail.

Learning to walk was dealt with by a montage of superimposed shots of More in close-up showing the considerable physical effort required, and the pain being caused to his 'stumps', coupled with views of his feet, unsteadily jerking forward. Added to these were shots of him falling over plus a couple of a genuine amputee with 'tin' legs, presumably the hospital almoner, tripping and falling.

During this period there were many visitors to the studio, most notably the real Dorothy Brace and the real Sister (later Matron) Thornhill. Matron Thornhill had nursed Bader during the initial critical period after the operations, and she loaned her original cap and badge to Anne Leon who was her screen counterpart. On the hospital set, she cast an experienced eye about and pointed to the bed castors which were turned out: 'We'd never have had that!' The castors were promptly turned in.

One person conspicuous by his absence was Douglas Bader. By this time he had dissociated himself from the film, and apparently the cast were hurt by this, feeling that he could have paid just one visit.

The only real aeroplane that went to Pinewood was one of the Mk XVI Spitfires for cockpit close-ups and the critical bale-out sequence over France when Bader's leg got jammed by the pedals. Shot against back projection, this unidentified machine was upended on its nose for filming, as Kenneth More jettisoned the tear-drop canopy and struggled to release his leg.

He is seen being drawn from the cockpit, probably by a wire, and a final shot shows the right leg still in the aeroplane. To get this shot, the forward petrol tanks of the Spitfire and associated panelling would have been removed to permit access for the camera.

The studio hospital garden set. Kenneth More is using the wheelchair with the artificial seat and box underneath to conceal his own legs, with the 'stumps' on top. (He must have worn a very complicated pair of trousers — four legs!) With him, about to place a blanket over his 'stumps', probably for the censor's benefit, is Dorothy Alison as Nurse Dorothy Brace.

The well-remembered scene of Kenneth More taking his first steps at Roehampton on 'tin legs'. Sydney Tafler as Robert Desoutter, the owner of the company (together with his brother Marcel) that manufactured artificial limbs, keeps a watchful eye on More's initial ungainly progress. The two assistants were 'stump experts' — one specialising in above-the-knee amputations, and the other in below-the-knee.

Special Effects

After the shooting in the studio was completed towards the end of November, the model makers and special effects personnel began filming their contribution to the production, which would later be married with the library combat footage.

It is unfortunate that models invariably look unconvincing (although the Bulldog was an exception) and techniques in this field are always advancing, rendering what has gone before as less than ideally desired. Seeing the film for the first time as a nine-year-old in 1956, I was enthralled by all the battles, and obviously did not question the techniques or standards involved, but having looked at it countless times over the intervening years, the flaws are abundantly obvious and one cannot help but make comparisons with say, the large scale radio-controlled Stukas in the *Battle of Britain*. But that was thirteen years later, shot outside, employing more sophisticated techniques and (never forget) more money. Yet when viewed today, even the special effects in *that* film are looking dated.

For *Reach For the Sky* a replica cockpit section of a Bf 109 was built and was shown two or three times, and at least once carried a Swastika riddled with bullet holes on the side under the canopy so that the audience were left in no doubt as to who was getting their 'just desserts'. Later it was seen in flames with the doomed German pilot trying to claw his way out.

During this period there was one more real flight to be carried out and this took place on December 10 when the Bristol Fighter, carrying a camera, and the Avro 504K took off from Old Warden to film the 504 doing some mild aerobatics over the Cardington area of Bedfordshire. This material was inserted in the opening title sequence and later when More and Warre go for a spin from Kenley shortly before More leaves the RAF.

Library Footage

The abundant use of archive film was really the only option open to Lewis Gilbert for the battle scenes. Most of the models had portrayed Bader leading No. 242's Hurricanes and the 'Big Wing' against large formations of German bombers and fighters. What alternative was there for a man with only one serviceable Hurricane to his name?

The film sections chosen were a hotch-potch of clips of differing types of aircraft of varying authenticity. The great majority of Luftwaffe aircraft getting shot down were Focke-Wulf 190s, one clip clearly showing the pilot baling out. Included was a brief shot of the famous Dornier falling on Victoria station in London in 1940. Also seen were a couple of Bf 109Fs or Gs, a Bf 109E and, perhaps most interesting of all, a Bf 110 in RAF markings (the roundel on the underside of the port wing is distinctly seen) being pursued by a Spitfire, presumably from footage filmed for evaluation purposes. On the RAF side, mostly in evidence were Spitfire Mk 1s of No. 501 Squadron which this unit operated in early 1941.

When all the aerial models and archive film had been edited, together with the studio cockpit close-ups, there were only two original clips of the Spitfire Mk XVIs included: three of them as No. 19 Squadron performing a peel-off to starboard and then to port.

On the subject of choosing library footage for combat sequences, I spoke independently to two television directors who have been involved in separate episodes of a yet-to-be-seen aviation drama series. The first was not hostile but labelled me with the tag 'purist' as though I was some sort of freak. The second was more enlightening and said that he chose his library material firstly on the grounds of dramatic impact and secondly picture quality as it had to be matched with clearly defined, modern, specially-shot footage. Of course this problem is more acute today because of the use of colour, which again limits the amount of library material suitable for inclusion. Although working in monochrome, Lewis Gilbert undoubtedly also had to bear in mind picture quality, and that may be a contributing factor as to why camera gun footage from the latter war period was used because standards had considerably improved by then.

Into combat over Dunkirk, Kenneth More in the unknown studio Spitfire XVI. This picture graphically illustrates the difference between this Mk and the Mk Ia's in the back projection library footage. They are both machines of No. 501 squadron. The tear-drop canopy provided a sharp contrast in all the Spitfire cockpit scenes in the film, as invariably the aircraft in the background were more or less authentic.

Release

Some eleven months after filming had begun at Kenley, *Reach for the Sky* had its London premiere at the Odeon, Leicester Square, on July 5, 1956 in the presence of Prince Philip. Typical of these occasions, it was an evening of colour, sparkle, celebrities and reporters, but there was no sign of Douglas Bader. One newspaper tracked him down to St. Andrews in Scotland, playing golf on the Old Course in a howling gale, and the following morning a piece appeared in which he was quoted as being 'flattered . . . (that) they should have made a film of my life'. He also admitted to not being able to face 'having my photograph taken with a lot of celebrities then thinking, "Look — that's you up on the screen. You're a hero." '

The following paragraph in the paper had more relevance to his attitude at the time towards the production. He was quoted: 'It's different seeing it with a crowd of the boys when you can have a good laugh if you want to. I have seen the picture. I think it's excellent — even although they could hardly be expected to get everything right. After all they were fitting twenty years into two hours.'

Following on from its amazing success in the UK *Reach for the Sky* was released in the United States in May 1957. Ranks sent More to America with a large promotion budget. The film was shown at the Sutton Theatre in New York and he 'plugged' it on every radio show available, not to mention Press conferences, lunches and dinners from the East to the West Coast, but to no avail — it just did not achieve wide distribution. Both the *New Yorker* and *Time* magazine were unkind in their criticism. The former referred to the story as being about 'a man called Douglas Bader', which said something for the USA's awareness of our heroes, and claimed that Bader had been technical adviser on the picture! As Kenneth More was later to write: 'The Americans did not want to know about British war heroes. At the time Bader was flying a plane over Germany without legs, the United States was not even involved with the war'.

Notwithstanding American apathy towards it, *Reach for the Sky* was well received in many countries including Spain, Canada and even Japan but, as with the great majority of films, it was inevitably sold for exhibition on British television. Oddly enough, its most recent showing in the London area of Independent Television — April 11, 1981 — almost twenty-five years after the premiere, was on a Saturday evening during peak viewing time at seven o'clock and, like so many others before it, the film fell foul of the usual criticism: 'Why must we have such old films on TV?' This comment is a near relative of: 'Why must we have so many American programmes on British television?'

Conclusion

As a film it is truly representative of the British cinema of the fifties, consequently it looks a little quaint when viewed today, especially if compared with more modern offerings, but I believe that any film should be looked at and judged *within the context of the period in which it was made*.

Although the director employed a semi-documentary approach to the project, ultimately the film had to tell a story that entertained the general audience, which indeed it achieved with outstanding success. Quite frankly *Reach for the Sky* should be accepted for itself as a good story well told, presented and performed. The deviations from the book, the alterations or ommissions of characters and the incorrect variants of some aeroplanes should not be allowed to deter the viewer from enjoying a good film typical of its era.

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